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"Great Writers."

EDITED BY

ERIC S. ROBERTSON, M.A.,

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PUNJAB, LAHORE.

LIFE OF LONGFELLOW.

LIFE

OF

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

BY

ERIC S. ROBERTSON

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WALTER SCOTT
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

TO

"GREAT WRITERS."

THIS series of little monographs has been designed to furnish the public with interesting and accurate accounts of the men and women notable in Modern Literature. Each monthly volume of "Great Writers" will be the work of an experienced biographer. It will be a chronicle of the chief events in a famous author's life; it will give a critical history of that author's works; it will also contain a full bibliography of these works; and it will be prefaced by an analytical Table of Contents, that will summarize the biography on a new plan.

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LIFE OF LONGFELLOW.

CHAPTER I.

SHAKESPEARE had lain in his grave four years, and John Milton was a schoolboy of twelve, when Mary Chilton tremblingly leapt from the *Mayflower's* pinnace at Cape Cod, and fluttered on to America's rocks like a dove from a new ark. Among the sturdy bigots who had rowed her to the shore, and allowed her to be first of the Puritans to land in the New World, was John Alden: of the company there was also a Yorkshire lass named Priscilla Mullens, whom John Alden coveted for a wife; and he got her. It was this same Priscilla Mullens who really uttered the artless rejoinder, "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?" that is used with such effect in the story of "Miles Standish." In the latter half of the eighteenth century a descendant of Mr. and Mrs. Alden figured in Portland, Maine, as General Peleg Wadsworth,—upright, bustling, big-built, one who had been among the first to rise in revolution, when "was fired the shot heard round the world," and one who in old age could show wounds and tell many stories brought from the earliest of American battle-fields. General Peleg Wadsworth had eleven children, and

his eldest daughter, Zilpah, became the mother of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the poet.

Fifty or sixty years after the Puritans disembarked from the *Mayflower*, an emigrant from England called William Longfellow settled at Newbury, Massachusetts, and there married and begat six children. Like Priscilla Mullens, he came from Yorkshire, and such slight record of his youth and career as is left to us proves him to have been industrious and successful as a colonist. But his end was premature; for in 1690 he joined the Newbury Company's Expedition against Quebec, and in one of that ill-starred association's vessels was wrecked and drowned off the shore of Anticosti. The house that this progenitor of the American Longfellows built at Byfield, Newbury, was still standing, but in ruins, in 1882. Pictures represent it as a substantial building of wood, with a crooked elm in front; and William Longfellow may have half-fancied, on a summer evening, that he could hear the caw of the Yorkshire rooks amid the branches of this tree. One of William's sons, Stephen, became a blacksmith at Newbury; the blacksmith also begat a son, christened Stephen, who was rewarded for signs of precocious talent by being sent to Harvard College, and then developed into a schoolmaster. Although he began active life as a schoolmaster, this Stephen Longfellow ended as a man of some property, and town clerk of Gorham, Maine. He kept the records of his town in a handwriting of which the beautiful character has been faithfully copied by most of his descendants. Now the town clerk, after the manner of his father, in turn called one of his boys

Stephen: and this Stephen held many offices in his time, beginning as a surveyor, and finally driving in a square-topped chaise as judge of the Court of Common Pleas at Portland. As all the Longfellows who were christened Stephen seemed to prosper, the judge gave this name to his second-born. And here—so far as our genealogy need go—the Stephens end. This last Stephen was altogether an exemplary man. He graduated at Harvard along with Judge Story and Dr. Channing, joined the Bar in 1801, and three years later married the Zilpah Wadsworth already mentioned.

This couple had a family of eight, and the poet was their second son. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, then, was born at Portland, Maine, on the 27th of February, 1807. The birth took place in a house standing at the corner of Fore Street and Hancock Street, near the shore. This was the abode of friends with whom the Longfellows happened to be living for a few weeks, ere removing to the mansion which General Peleg about this time made over to them. Those who hold with Mr. Marcus Clarke that poetry is evolved from tainted blood, and to call a man a genius is physiologically to insult the mother that bore him, might be puzzled to account for the development of Henry Longfellow's powers. He was descended from two families in each of which Yorkshire muscle and pluck had been healthily developed for several generations on the western shores of the Atlantic. The father's side of the house showed an exceptionally good record, so far as clear skins and fine limbs went. The Longfellows had been as a tribe a trifle dull perhaps; no one of them had given signs of

any creative fancy; they were all of the kind to turn neither to the right nor to the left, but do with their strength whatsoever their hands found to do. As might be expected, the last of the Stephens showed by his refinement the results of education amid comparative affluence. Channing has said of him, "I never knew a man more free from everything offensive to good taste. He seemed to breathe an atmosphere of purity as his natural element, while his bright intelligence, buoyant spirits, and social warmth, diffused a sunshine of joy that made his presence always gladsome." This was the mild-mannered, God-fearing lawyer who carefully bred his children to cultivate respect towards their seniors, to love duty, and scorn debt above all things. Over Henry's education he watched with a sort of prescience that recalls the solicitude of the elder Goethe about Wolfgang's studies. As for Zilpah, the mother, it was from her gentle features that Henry took his cast of countenance. There is something of the woman in the face of every man of genius, as Coleridge remarked. Mrs. Longfellow was a great lover of nature, and was wont to enjoy the splendours of every thunderstorm that visited Portland. The Bible was her library; the Psalms were her chosen reading. She shared the secrets of all her children; her neighbours and the poor at large loved her.

Portland, "the Forest City," is beautiful in these days of ours, and will always be beautiful, with its great gulf of rolling blue, Cape Elizabeth at one horn, and at the other the miniature archipelago called Casco Bay,—the low hills of Munjoy and Bramhall piled up behind the houses, backed again by stretches of the noblest woodland.

Every street has its trees. In the days of Longfellow's childhood, however, Portland was in some respects more beautiful still, because smaller, and more natural—especially in its unappropriated shore-line. In these days it maintained trade with the West Indies, its merchants fetching thence sugar and rum, and sending lumber and dried fish in return. Whenever a vessel arrived, the town was in excitement, and the little boys had high times. The wharf was enlivened all day and all night with the songs of the negro teams, who hauled the hogsheads from the hold with block and tackle. Long lines of board-teams creaked along the quays to Portland Pier; sleds groaned by their side; surveyors ran about like madmen, measuring, shouting, expediting, stopping; cattle steamed in a rime of frost, while their nostrils were hung with icicles; the taverns were lighted up at almost every hour of darkness throughout the night, ready to serve drams of hot rum.

The houses and shops were mostly of wood. There was no theatre, but churches and spirit-stores abounded. "The Freemasons' Arms" was then managed by the grandfather of John Lothrop Motley. Few families kept carriages, and public vehicles there were none to speak of. Nearly every house had its barn, and a cow that was driven home through the streets at night from Munjoy Hill. The American stove had not yet been erected like a monument over the ashes of the open fireside so dear to us in England. Of course there were no matches; flint and steel and tinder served. Among the men, cocked hats and bush wigs and knee-breeches were going out; the fashion was pantaloons;

the hair could still be seen in curls on the older polls. *The Portland Gazette* and *The Eastern Argus* each appeared once a week. The money in circulation was Spanish chiefly — dollars, half-dollars, quarters, pistareens, eighths, and sixteenths.

When Henry Longfellow was five years old, defensive works were garrisoned on Portland shore to repel the English. About this time a splendid sea fight took place off the coast of Maine. The British brig *Boxer*, Captain S. Blythe, was captured by the American brig *Enterprize*, Lieutenant W. Burrows. The victorious vessel towed its prize into Portland harbour, and the commanders, who had both been killed in the fight, were buried side by side at the foot of Munjoy Hill.

Such were the sights and sounds that made up so much of the boy Longfellow's experience. Had he died at twenty-five, no one would have been aware that these things had made themselves into the substance of poetry in his mind. But in middle age he gave us the scenes back again in simple lines of which the subtle charm is as much a puzzle to the critic as the style of anything the poet ever wrote.

MY LOST YOUTH.

OFTEN I think of the beautiful town
That is seated by the sea ;
Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
And my youth comes back to me.
And a verse of a Lapland song
Is haunting my memory still :
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
And catch, in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides
Of all my boyish dreams.
And the burden of that old song,
It murmurs and whispers still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the black wharves and the slips,
And the sea-tides tossing free;
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.
And the voice of that wayward song
Is singing and saying still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
And the fort upon the hill;
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,
And the bugle wild and shrill.
And the music of that old song
Throbs in my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the sea-fight far away,
How it thundered o'er the tide!
And the dead captains, as they lay
In their graves o'erlooking the tranquil bay,
Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods ;
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with a sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighbourhoods.
And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still :
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the schoolboy's brain ;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.
And the voice of that fitful song
Sings on, and is never still :
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

There are things of which I may not speak ;
There are dreams that cannot die ;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye.
And the words of that fatal song
Come over me like a chill :
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town ;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still :
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
  And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,
  I find my lost youth again.
    And the strange and beautiful song,
    The groves are repeating it still:
  "A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

In "The Ropewalk" and "Kéramos" we have further sketches from boyhood's days. The school in which he had his "gleams and glooms" was a dame's school, kept by Ma'am Fellows, whose only recorded maxim was that "One should never smile in school hours." Poor, grim, little schoolmistress! she must have come from Salem. After he had learnt to spell at the knees of this instructress, the boy attended no fewer than three other schools, the last being the Portland Academy, wherein Jacob Abbott, author of "The Young Christian," was then an usher.

During his schoolboy days Longfellow was ever studious, but wholly averse from sports and any exercise save walking. True, when he was a very little fellow, he rose in arms like a true-born patriot. His aunt wrote thus after the outbreak of the war in 1812: "Canada must be subdued, or the opportunity will be lost. Our little Henry is ready to march; he had his gun prepared and his head powdered a week ago." And two years later he writes to his father: "I wish you to buy me a drum." But there is a family tradition of his having begged a servant on a glorious Fourth of July to put cotton in his ears to deaden the sound of the cannon. His childish

nerves shrank from noise, and even in late life he closed the shutters of his room during any thunderstorm. One of his book-plates bore for motto, "Non clamor, sed amor." Once, in school days, his elder brother took him to the woods with a gun, but he soon returned with tears in his eyes. He had shot a robin, and that was the last time he ever pulled a trigger.

At home he enjoyed music, and there were many fine books. He pored over Cowper's Poems and "Lalla Rookh," declaimed from Ossian, and procured unending delight from the "Arabian Nights" and "Don Quixote." But the volume of volumes to him was Washington Irving's "Sketch Book." "Every reader has his first book:—I mean to say, one book among many others which in early youth first fascinates his imagination, and at once excites and satisfies the desires of his mind. To me this first book was the 'Sketch Book' of Washington Irving. I was a schoolboy when it was published, and read each succeeding number with ever-increasing wonder and delight, spell-bound by its pleasant humour, its melancholy tenderness, its atmosphere of reverie—nay, even by its gray-brown covers, the shaded letters of its titles, and the fine, clean type, which seemed an outward symbol of its style. The old fascination remains about it, and whenever I open its pages, I open also that mysterious door which leads back into the haunted chambers of youth."

Henry went twice every Sunday to the Unitarian Church, carrying in winter his mother's foot-stove, in summer her nosegay. His first attempt at verse-writing was undertaken "to order" at school, when he was but nine years old.

"You can write words, can you not?" said his teacher. "Yes." "You can put them together?" "Yes." "Then take your slate, go out behind the school-house, look about you, and write me something about what you see. That will be a composition." So Henry went forth, and he spied a fine turnip growing by the side of a barn. He had been allowed only half an hour for the execution of his task, therefore he made speed to study the turnip, and within the prescribed number of minutes took to the master a few verses wherein he had set forth his ideas on the vegetable that had arrested his attention. Thus early, some of his detractors might say, did he manifest his genius for the commonplace. At thirteen he wrote in Portland Academy a song called "Venice," and as the lines were preserved, with his signature attached in full, they were produced in America some time ago as the earliest extant offspring of his muse. However, a critic pointed out that the piece was merely an extract from the poetical works of Rogers, and most probably it had been copied out as a task.

And now we come to the first published verses really written by the poet. Not far from Hiram, in Maine, there is a pretty little lake with a sandy beach, called Lovewell's (or Lovell's) Pond, and this was the scene of a somewhat heroic encounter between white settlers and Indians during the Franco-Indian War. "Lovell's Fight," as history has named this encounter, laid hold of young Longfellow's imagination. He worked up the story into a set of verses, and one night dropped his manuscript into the letter-box of *The Argus*. The deed was watched by an encouraging group of

schoolfellows. But expectation was baulked; week after week passed, and the newspaper columns were scanned in vain. Then the young author sought the editor boldly, and asked for the return of the manuscript —a favour that was at once granted. The editor of Portland's rival paper—*The Gazette*—was now treated with, and this gentleman was less difficult to please. He printed the poem in his issue of November 17, 1820, and thus acquired the honour of being the first to help the young man towards recognition from the public. On the evening of November 16th, the poor lad stood for an hour at the door of the printing-office in Exchange Street, shivering with cold, but listening to the jarring sound of the ink-balls and the presses that were thudding as regularly as his own beating heart. Was it his poem they were thus labouring to multiply?

In the morning, how slowly his father unfolded the damp sheet, and how carefully he dried it at the fire ere beginning to read it! And how much foreign news there seemed to be in it! At last Henry and a sympathetic sister who shared his secret obtained a peep over their parent's shoulder—and the poem was there! They spent most of the day reading it. In the evening they went to play with a son of Judge Mellen, and while the Judge was sitting by the fire in the twilight, with the young folk and a few elder neighbours around him, he said: "Did you see the piece in to-day's paper? Very stiff; remarkably stiff! Moreover, it is all borrowed, every word of it."

This was the first criticism Longfellow received from his public, and it caused him to wet his pillow with tears

that night. In reality, the verses must have been rather above the average of "Poets' Corner" literature in Portland, and as the work of a boy still at school, they are even remarkable for a certain melodious sweep of rhythm that betrays little stiffness, except in the concluding quatrain.

THE BATTLE OF LOVELL'S POND.

COLD, cold is the north wind and rude is the blast
That sweeps like a hurricane loudly and fast,
As it moans through the tall waving pines lone and drear,
Sighs a requiem sad o'er the warrior's bier.

The war-whoop is still, and the savage's yell
Has sunk into silence along the wild dell;
The din of the battle, the tumult, is o'er,
And the war-clarion's voice is now heard no more.

The warriors that fought for their country—and bled,
Have sunk to their rest; the damp earth is their bed;
No stone tells the place where their ashes repose,
Nor points out the spot from the graves of their foes.

They died in their glory, surrounded by fame,
And Victory's loud trump their death did proclaim;
They are dead; but they live in each Patriot's breast,
And their names are engraven on honour's bright crest.

HENRY.

By and by *The Gazette* printed other verses from the same pen, and it became known among the boy-author's friends, that the signature of "Henry" was his.

CHAPTER II.

STEPHEN LONGFELLOW had graduated at Harvard, as we have seen. The State of Maine, however, now boasted a College of its own—Bowdoin College, at Brunswick. Stephen Longfellow was a trustee of this still struggling seminary, and he thought it his duty to support it in every way within his power. Accordingly his sons Stephen and Henry were shipped thither in a smack, when Portland Academy had taught them all it knew, and the tall, slender, blue-eyed, brown-haired, ruddy-cheeked poet-in-embryo took up his abode at Brunswick in the September of 1822. As we might expect, Henry carried to Bowdoin his studious habits, and a shyness of which only one of his contemporaries —Nathaniel Hawthorne—gave equal token. Besides Hawthorne, there were many young students at Bowdoin destined to shine in later life; indeed, the class to which these two young men belonged is reckoned to have contained more students of remarkable promise than any since held within the walls of the building. "I see in my pupils," said Luther, "future burgomasters of the city; therefore is it that I doff my hat to them when I enter the class-room." Could the Bowdoin Professors

have foretold the history of Longfellow and his class-mates, they would have unbonneted to them daily, no doubt. Thence came John S. C. Abbott, the historian; J. W. Bradbury, Pierce, Josiah Little, and Jonathan Cilley, all politicians of more or less note; George B. Cheever, preacher and author, besides the two authors who are the Castor and Pollux of American literature. Hawthorne (his name, by the way, was then spelt Hathorne) thus describes Bowdoin students in "Fanshawe," a tale which he produced at Boston about 1828:[1]

"From the exterior of the collegians, an accurate observer might pretty safely judge how long they had been inmates of those classic walls. The brown cheeks and the rustic dress of some would inform him that they had but recently left the plough to labour in a not less toilsome field. The grave look, and the intermingling of garments of a more classic cut, would distinguish those who had begun to acquire the polish of their new residence; and the air of superiority, the paler cheek, the less robust form, the spectacles of green, and the dress in general of threadbare black, would designate the highest class, who were understood to have acquired nearly all the science their Alma Mater could bestow, and to be on the point of assuming their stations in the world. There were, it is true, exceptions to this general description. A few young men had found their way hither from the distant seaports; and these were the models of fashion to their rustic companions, over whom they asserted a superiority in exterior accomplishments, which the fresh,

[1] Suppressed by the author as soon as published.

though unpolished, intellect of the sons of the forest denied them in their literary competitions. A third class, differing widely from both the former, consisted of a few young descendants of the aborigines, to whom an impracticable philanthropy was endeavouring to impart the benefits of civilization.

"If this institution did not offer all the advantages of elder and prouder seminaries, its deficiencies were compensated to its students by the inculcation of regular habits, and of a deep and awful sense of religion, which seldom deserted them in their course through life. The mild and gentle rule was more destructive to vice than a sterner sway; and, though youth is never without its follies, they have seldom been more harmless than they were here. The students, indeed, ignorant of their own bliss, sometimes wished to hasten the time of their entrance on the business of life; but they found, in after-years, that many of their happiest remembrances, many of the scenes which they would with least reluctance live over again, referred to the seat of their early studies."

Such was the modest life that Longfellow tranquilly passed for three years, maintaining high rank for scholarliness, rather slow of speech, absent-minded at times even during class recitations, but ever observant of duty towards his instructors, and true to his few chosen associates. Hawthorne was confessedly the laggard and scapegrace of the class, only making good appearances when matters of English composition were on hand; but Longfellow was a model of propriety to the verge of pardonable priggishness. He graduated at nineteen

(1825), and was assigned the delivery of one of the three "English Orations," usually given to the most distin guished degree-men. He chose as his theme "Native Writers," and no doubt did the best he could with the subject under the limitations put upon him. Authority decreed that each "Oration" should last seven minutes! This "Oration" of seven minutes' length on "Native Writers" serves to remind us that Bowdoin was a young college in a young country.

The same fact is noticeable in connection with the next point of Longfellow's career. One of the College Trustees, Mr. Benjamin Orr, had been so much charmed with a translation from Horace made by the young man at the Senior Examination, that on the strength of this performance he recommended him for a proposed Chair of Modern Languages! Let not the English academic mind, nevertheless, amuse itself too much over this curious proposal. Our own Cambridge has known such things. Did not Watson, the once celebrated Dr. Watson, obtain the Chair of Chemistry at Cambridge ere ever he had conducted a chemical experiment? And did he not, before becoming Bishop of Llandaff, obtain the Professorship of Divinity at the same University, being at the time of the appointment in secular ignorance of the very Articles, and promising to acquaint himself with the business of his Chair after election? Mr. Orr's kindly proposal with regard to this promising young scholar was provisionally approved by the Board, and Longfellow was directed to proceed to Europe—at his father's expense—and there acquire the additional learning necessary to a Professor of Modern Languages.

Accordingly he packed up his things and went home joyful to Portland. Then the autumn of 1825 and the spring of 1826 were spent in rest—a little reading in Blackstone at his father's office not counting for much. In May he left home for New York, and on the 15th of the same month he embarked in a packet that set sail for Havre-de-Grâce.

Probably there was not a single member of his circle of acquaintances who up to this point in his career discovered reason for regarding Longfellow as a young man destined to make a world-wide reputation. He had given no sign of unmistakable originality in word or deed. His literary performances, however, had already marked him out as highly distinguished among the few whom America at the time could claim as workers in letters, and some twenty contributions to *The American Monthly Magazine* and *The United States Literary Gazette*—the earliest native magazines of respectable calibre—had sufficed, by their purity and grace of diction, and by pleasant although far from startling displays of fancy, to put the Professor-elect next to Bryant as an American poet. Bryant's precocious genius had asserted itself in tones of power when he was only nineteen; for at that age he produced "Thanatopsis," a work of solemn grandeur, of which any country's literature might well be proud, and a poem which, in range of vision and intuitive apprehension of some of the deepest problems of human history, not only surprised the world as coming from a trans-Atlantic lad, but marked the highest point to which Bryant's thought ever attained. Longfellow was much longer in reaching a knowledge of

his own capabilities in poetry. Indeed, we might be justified in saying that hardly ever has any poet destined to win the ear of the world betrayed in his youth less promise and less of imagination's "divine hunger" than Longfellow. An eminently sane youth, he refrained from attempting to make himself or his friends believe that he was possessed by any particular afflatus; and it is quite possible that if Mr. Orr had not taken notice of the lucky Horatian ode, the young graduate of Bowdoin would have subsided into honourable enough toil in his father's office, might perhaps have gone to the Bar, and spent his maturity on the Bench, remembering little of the manuscripts that every man of more than average talents preserves somewhere about his desk in token of boyish ambitions. Most men have been helped to write useful prose by the composition of youthful verse, and, as Thoreau once said, "Having gotten together the materials to build a bridge to the moon, conclude to build a woodshed with them." That Longfellow's father, at any rate, had no thought of setting him up as a poet, is made clear enough by a letter from his son, written as late as April 30, 1824; and here we find that the student was rather inclined to elect for himself the healthy occupation of a farmer.

"Your letter of the 21st was particularly acceptable to me, as it was the only one I have received from you for a great many weeks, and I shall keep the cypress from the tomb of Washington as a sacred relic. But in thinking to make a lawyer of me, I think you thought more partially than justly. I do not, for my own

part, imagine that such a coat would suit me. I hardly think Nature designed me for the bar, or the pulpit, or the dissecting-room. I am altogether in favour of the farmer's life. Do keep the farmer's boots for me!"

By the following December, however, Henry Longfellow had changed his mind, evidently after a good deal of calculation. The following letter was penned not long before the proposal about the Chair of Modern Languages was brought forward :—

"I take this early opportunity to write to you, because I wish to know fully your inclination with regard to the profession I am to pursue when I leave college.

"For my part, I have already hinted to you what would best please me. I want to spend one year at Cambridge for the purpose of reading history, and of becoming familiar with the best authors in polite literature; whilst at the same time I can be acquiring a knowledge of the Italian language, without an acquaintance with which I shall be shut out from one of the most beautiful departments of letters. The French I mean to understand pretty thoroughly before I leave college. After leaving Cambridge, I would attach myself to some literary periodical publication, by which I could maintain myself and still enjoy the advantages of reading. Now, I do not think that there is anything visionary or chimerical in my plan thus far. The fact is—and I will not disguise it in the least, for I think I ought not—the fact is, I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature; my whole soul burns most ardently for it,

and every earthly thought centres in it. There may be something visionary in *this*, but I flatter myself that I have prudence enough to keep my enthusiasm from defeating its own object by too great haste. Surely, there never was a better opportunity offered for the exertion of literary talent in our own country than is now offered. To be sure, most of our literary men thus far have not been professedly so, until they have studied and entered the practice of Theology, Law, or Medicine. But this is evidently lost time. I do believe that we ought to pay more attention to the opinion of philosophers, that 'nothing but Nature can qualify a man for knowledge.'

"Whether Nature has given me any capacity for knowledge or not, she has at any rate given me a very strong predilection for literary pursuits, and I am almost confident in believing, that, if I can ever rise in the world, it must be by the exercise of my talent in the wide field of literature. With such a belief, I must say that I am unwilling to engage in the study of the law.

"Here, then, seems to be the starting-point: and I think it best for me to float out into the world upon that tide and in that channel which will the soonest bring me to my destined port, and not to struggle against both wind and tide, and by attempting what is impossible lose everything."

The tone of this letter, as of all the letters addressed by the son to the father, shows the excellent understanding that subsisted between the two. A fortnight later, Henry still proved his dutifulness by writing: "Of divinity,

medicine, and law, I should choose the last. Whatever I do study ought to be engaged in with all my soul—for *I will be eminent* in something." Within a few weeks of the time at which these words were put on paper, the acclivity to this desirable eminence was revealed, and from that moment to the end of a long life, the poet's career was singularly free from stumbling-blocks.

While a Bowdoin student, Longfellow contributed in all seventeen pieces of verse to *The Literary Gazette.* From these he afterwards chose five as worthy of preservation; they are "An April Day," "Sunrise on the Hills," "Woods in Winter," "Autumn," and the "Hymn of the Moravian Nuns." Of the five, the Hymn is the most effective and certainly the most popular; but it was founded on a curious mistake. Reading one day a number of *The North American Review*, the young poet came across the following suggestive sentence: "The standard of Count Casimir Pulaski's legion was formed of a piece of silk, embroidered by the Moravian Nuns of Bethlehem in Pennsylvania." The word "nuns" here was a slip of the pen, and should have been "sisters." The Moravians of Pennsylvania of course had the plainest of churches, and led the simplest of Protestant lives; and when Pulaski was recruiting soldiers in their district, he employed a few of the sisters, who eked out a living by embroidery, to make him a small flag to attach to a lance. The poet, however, found his whole motive in the word "nuns," and hence spring the glimmering tapers, cowled heads, burning censers, mysterious aisle, vesper-chant, and blood-red banner that was big enough to become "his martial cloak and shroud."

"Sunrise on the Hills" concludes in a manner that is worth noticing, as affording an indication that the author recognized with Wordsworth the solace of nature; and indeed the American's poem forms a close parallel to one of Wordsworth's most famous passages. Every student of the Lake poet remembers the verses of which these seem an echo:

> "If thou art worn and hard beset
> With sorrows, that thou wouldst forget;
> If thou wouldst read a lesson, that will keep
> Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep,
> Go to the woods and hills!—No tears
> Dim the sweet look that Nature wears."

Wordsworth's influences, nevertheless, had not reached the young American directly; they had been passed through the medium of Bryant's nature-studies.

Those who are curious to read the twelve early poems which Longfellow himself wished to be forgotten, will find them reprinted in a little volume brought out in London by Mr. Shepherd, in 1878.

CHAPTER III.

THE attentive reader may have been struck with this sentence in a letter of Longfellow's which we have quoted: "Surely, there never was a better opportunity for the exertion of literary talent in our own country than is now afforded." The words are worth stopping to examine.

From a new country we can as little expect literature as we can expect to find, in the clearing of a wheat-growing Western farmer, timber for the building of great ships. The English settlers in America had far more to do, for several generations, than sit down and study style. Their circumstances developed hardihood, honesty, helpfulness —firing their eyes with resolve, and a shining hope that still gleams in every young American face—giving them a wholesome trust in Providence and pluck, and surrounding them with a certain rude romance. In short, they realized that in laying the foundations of a nation, men need all their time for the manufacture of facts, and must leave dreams alone during daylight, although the same facts often enough, instead of being moulded into poetry, mould their creators into rough human poems.

In the two centuries during which the English settlers found themselves thrown up like a belt of seaweed all along the coast—a mere handful of beings at each point, with the bare Atlantic on one side of them, and on the other a whole uncultivated continent, tenanted only by unfriendly savages and wild beasts, their gospel of getting-on was pretty much that which Emerson was afterwards to put into an aphorism: "Facts are in the saddle, and ride mankind;" and all the imagination they found time to develop, became intensified superstition. Thus must a tree thrust itself about in the earth, and lay hold of the rocks and stones ere it can grow towards the ether of the birds.

Think what the early colonists were in Elizabeth's days!—Freebooters all, possessed with a sort of mad, cut-throat knight-errantry, ready to do or die any day, in the endeavour to assert themselves over any creatures of God who were not Englishmen. In the veins of some flowed noble blood, but that was no whit the less daring and aggressive.

After many years, the descendants of these fire-eaters became tamer; but they were still beset with daily perils, and every man of them might be said to be a private in a standing militia. Then to this great incursion—which we may liken to the Danish invasion of Britain—succeeded the Puritan incursion, with Miles Standish at its head, like Hengist and his Saxons, save that the Puritans were soldiers not only of the sword but of the spirit—zealots determined to conquer for Jehovah, and kill and burn in His name, if need be. Never in the history of the world were men in such awful

earnest as these Puritans in America. While Herrick was making his confectioneries of verse, and Henry More developing Neoplatonism, the Britishers in Massachusetts were delving and stockading, felling trees, and shooting natives. While the "golden-mouthed" Jeremy Taylor was adorning tolerant doctrine with a scholar's learning and a poet's eloquence, Endicott and Standish were striking down the maypole of Merry Mount, christening the spot "Dagon;" a maidservant who smiled in church at New Plymouth was threatened with expulsion from the colony; a woman who blamed an elder had a cleft stick put on her tongue; one saint's prayers were so vehement that he bled at the nose through the agony with which he laboured at them; and Edward Johnson, one of Winthrop's lieutenants, in a book called "The Wonder-Working Providence," thus piously described the relations of the Puritan colonists to the aborigines: "The Lord, in mercy toward His poor churches, having thus destroyed these bloody barbarian Indians, He returns His people in safety to their vessels, where they take account of their prisoners. The squaws and some youths they brought home with them; and finding the men to be deeply guilty of the crimes they undertook the war for, they brought away only their heads." These were times out of which the cruelties of bigotry grew at Salem, to dimly reflect the fires of the Spanish Inquisition. And such a spirit dominated absolutely the New England settlement for so long a period, that, as late as the middle of the eighteenth century, the priest-ridden people were kept crushed in spirit by all-powerful preachers like Jonathan Edwards, who could

harangue an audience thus: "The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; He looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire. . . . You are ten thousand times more abominable in His eyes than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of Divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe and burn it asunder. If you cry to God to pity you, He will be so far from pitying you in your doleful case, or showing you the least regard or favour, that instead of that, He will only tread you under foot, and though He will know that you cannot bear the weight of Omnipotence treading upon you, He will not regard that, but He will crush you under His feet without mercy; He will crush out your blood and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on His garments, so as to stain all His raiment."

Could men of gentle letters ever come from a stock of fanatics like this? Yes. After the zeal of Puritanism in England, came the reactionary license of the Restoration; but after the religious fever had left the body-politic in America, no such extreme revulsion occurred; for men there were living in circumstances of hardy life that kept them sane; and before very long to the world was given the purest-souled band of writers that ever sprang from a single nation in the same age—Bryant, Longfellow, Hawthorne, Emerson, Holmes, Lowell—every one of them directly descended from the Puritans. The chastity of these writers is no less marked than their catholic charity. This is a curious phenomenon in the history of a people's

thinkers; to ponder it is to watch a beautiful precipitation in a process of spiritual chemistry.

But let us see what the rough old days of the settlements did afford us. The very beginnings of modern America are dealt with in one of its earliest and most interesting books, "The True Relation of Virginia," by the first Governor of that colony, Captain John Smith. This book has been lately republished in London as a handy volume, and it well deserves to be brought before the public again; for its story is full of incidents that no novelist could make more romantic. "The True Relation" was first published in England in the year 1608; and therefore, speaking roughly, we may say that American Literature and John Milton were born in the same year. In 1610 appeared William Strachey's "Wrack and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates," the book that is supposed to have suggested to Shakespeare the scenery in "The Tempest." Sixteen or seventeen years after this, Sandys finished his translation of Ovid's "Metamorphoses" on the banks of the James River, and Vaughan the Silurist wrote his "Golden Fleece" in Newfoundland. The Puritans of Massachusetts had several early chroniclers, like William Bradford (born 1588); and Increase Mather's "Illustrious Providences" (1684) will always be remembered for its strange stories of implicitly-believed Divine interpositions, like those handed down from Scottish Covenanting times in some of the Wodrow Society's volumes. The noble tolerance of Roger Williams must be remembered in connection with his oddly-named volume, "The Bloody

Tenet of Persecution for Cause of Conscience" (1644). Cotton Mather's account of New England's ecclesiastical history—"Magnalia Christi" (1702)—contains much curious reading, mystified by absurdities of language. Jonathan Edwards's treatise on "The Freedom of the Will" (1754) is still a siege-gun among the Calvinists, and a crux for all philosophers.

The earliest book of verse published in America was "The Bay Psalm Book" (1640), now reckoned the most uncouth rendering of the psalms of David in the world. It was revised by President Dunster, "with special eye both to the gravity of the phrase of sacred writ and sweetness of the verse;" and yet, even in this version, we find stanzas like the following:

> "The rivers on of Babilon
> There when we did sit down,
> Yea, even then, we mourned when
> We remembered Sion."

Mrs. Anne Bradstreet (born 1612) was reckoned a power in her time, and versifiers called Norton and Rogers eulogized her in terms that recall Cowley's lines to Katherine Philips. Michael Wigglesworth's "Day of Doom" (1711), the most prodigious poetical success of its century—eighteen hundred copies being sold in one year—is described by Professor Coit Tyler as "a sulphurous poem, which attributes to the Divine Being a character the most execrable and loathsome to be met with, perhaps, in any literature, Christian or Pagan." In its days of power, children were made to learn it along with their Catechism; and one of the Mathers predicted that it would continue to be read in New England until the crack

of doom—a statement that reminds us of a wise saying of George Eliot's: "Among all forms of mistake, prophecy is the most gratuitous."

About the period of the Revolution, Benjamin Franklin's honest writings leavened the thoughts of his fellow-countrymen. In his "Autobiography" Americans and all the world still read with delight the prose epic of a life that, from the humblest beginnings, became a huge success by the exercise of indomitable perseverance. His "Poor Richard's Almanack" ranked him in Western minds with Confucius, as a proverb-maker. Whether it was that Franklin (born 1706) had in boyhood read the "Day of Doom," with a few other native poems, and thereafter foresworn all acquaintance with poets, we know not; but this was his estimate of their genius:

> "What are the poets, take them as they fall,
> Good, bad, rich, poor, much read, not read at all?
> Them and their works in the same class you'll find;
> They are the mere waste-paper of mankind."

Franklin was born only three years later than Jonathan Edwards; and the two thinkers form a curious contrast —the elder absorbed in contemplation of heaven and hell; the other most completely yet healthily of the earth earthly. It is worth noticing that to Franklin's enlightened enterprise America owed its first literary periodical — *The General Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, started at Philadelphia in 1741.

The orators of the Revolutionary period can scarcely be claimed as literary men, otherwise it would be agreeable to reproduce some of the really splendid examples of rhetoric that stud the recorded speeches of Alexander

Hamilton, Joseph Warren, John Hancock, James Wilson, Henry Lee, Thomas Jefferson, and Fisher Ames.

Among religious writers of this epoch are John Woolman, with his realistic "Journal," and Mather Byles of Boston. In the way of poetry, Judge Brackenridge wrote vigorous, unpolished verses about Bunker's Hill; Joel Barlow produced an epic called "The Columbiad," which is reckoned to throw such a serpent-like spell on the reader who approaches its endless coils, that he is mesmerised by the first dozen lines. It is said that the Ballads of the Revolution attracted Lord Chatham. "Bold Hawthorne," "Jack Bray," "The Fate of Burgoyne," "Wyoming Massacre," "Free America," "Yankee Doodle," sing patriotism in various keys. John Trumbull's satires, "The Progress of Dulness" and "Mac Fingal," and Timothy Dwight's "Conquest of Canaan" and "Greenfield Hill," are poems that still have admirers. "Mac Fingal," indeed, is worth reading; it was a power in its times, stirring up ridicule against the Tories—often in pithy lines which Butler might have been content to pass as his own. And Philip Freneau (born 1752) was a lyric writer who probably possessed more real poetical talent than any predecessor of Byrant. Our poet Campbell did him the honour to paraphrase in "O'Connor's Child" the following stanza from a telling dirge, "The Dying Indian."

> "By midnight moons o'er moistening dews,
> In vestments for the chase arrayed,
> The hunter still the deer pursues,
> The hunter and the deer—or shade."

Two prose writers who preceded Longfellow have still

to be mentioned; one is Charles Brockden Brown (born 1771), the other, as any reader will guess, must be Washington Irving. Brown was America's earliest novelist of any power; and great power he certainly did show fitfully, in weird passages of "Wieland," "Ormond," "Arthur Mervyn," and "Edgar Huntley." Professor Nichol quotes from Brown's brief description of yellow fever, horrors that are as circumstantial as anything in Defoe, and as truly dramatic as anything in Dickens. This novelist seems, like Charles Whitehead, to have missed high fame only by careless misdirection of his powers. Washington Irving (born 1783), the darling author of all hoary-headed Americans, added to humorous powers of observation and opportunities for travel and research, a style charmingly adapted from Addison. Although his popularity with the world at large has waned during the last thirty years, it is only because his choice of subjects did not admit of that universal style of treatment which makes the essays of Addison and Goldsmith perennial. The inimitable fun of his "Knickerbocker Papers," and the gentle beauty of his "Bracebridge Hall," are still within the knowledge of every real student of literature. And the influence of the "Sketch Book" has been to thousands what it was to Longfellow.

The sum of any inquiry into the merits of America's early writers might be best expressed in the words of a biographer of Hawthorne—"It takes a great deal of history to make a little literature."

Until Washington Irving wrote, no American had produced a book that Europe cared to lay on the shelf for a

second reading, and even Irving could not pretend to be a writer adequately representative of his race and times. No wonder, then, that Henry Longfellow, in the year that completed the first quarter of the nineteenth century, felt that there was room for an ambitious American man of letters. Many young fellows were just then thinking the same thing, and biding their chance. James Fenimore Cooper, it is true, had brought out his "Spy" in 1821; but Poe had not yet published a single poem; Motley was a schoolboy at Dorchester; Prescott was unknown; Whittier was working on his father's farm, and had got no further in literature than the corner of a newspaper; Emerson was a fledgeling parson; Holmes was entering Harvard; Hawthorne's cloudy genius had not yet caught the sun. Already the Bowdoin student of Horace had begun to formulate the canons of taste by which an aspirant for the place of an American poet of the age should guide himself. He felt that songs in the best English style about sky-larks, and other objects unknown to natives in his country, would never do. And probably he was already equally sure that, as Niebuhr once said, "Not to know what men did before you were born, is to be always a child." Long afterwards, at any rate, he thus expressed his theory to Walt Whitman: "Ere the New World can be worthily original, and announce herself and her own heroes, she must be well saturated with the originality of others, and respectfully consider the heroes that lived before Agamemnon." To steep himself in the culture of Europe he went forth from his own vast and lovely land, the noblest loan that it had yet made to the elder

nations, for he was a type of America's best-educated youth, and he was chivalrous and pure, and he carried with him, modestly and almost unconsciously, the impressionable mind of a true poet. He was to return and lift up a clear voice in song, as Schiller lifted up his voice after his country had lain for scores of years ungladdened by the melodies of any national singer; he was to be the first to bring the scholarship of Europe to the New World and make it live there, as Petrarch had centuries before rescued and revived for Europe itself the treasures of the Classic tongues; with his commingled learning, gentle charity, joy in life, and zeal for the beautiful, he was to become the father of America's *humanisti.*

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Longfellow arrived in France, after a pleasant thirty days' sail from New York, he began to stare about him and laugh at everything, a perfect boy. In the streets of the Normandy towns he shouted with glee as he met the fierce gendarmerie with their great curling beards, and girls with wooden shoes "full of feet and straw," men in paper hats and tight pantaloons, and the market dames in tall pyramidal caps of muslin two feet high. Such sights as these fill his early home letters. Then in Paris, after eulogizing the boarding-house of Madame Potet at No. 49, Rue Monsieur le Prince, he begins to show signs of nostalgia, as every good lad should, when first away from his family. Madame Potet's kindness, too, is found to be as evanescent as it is effervescing, and in her house are too many Americans and other English-speaking boarders; so he makes a curious change, and establishes himself in a *maison de santé* at Auteuil, where he endeavours to pick up the French tongue from a houseful of hypochondriacs, and consequently writes to his father, "I had no idea of the difficulties attending my situation, no idea that it was indeed so difficult to learn a language." From Auteuil

he goes off for a re-inspiriting pedestrian expedition along the banks of the Cher and the romantic Loire; and then he settles down again in the metropolis, *en garçon*, at Rue Racine, No. 5, picking up the language along with his meals, at crowded restaurants. The letters in which he describes his Paris life are really very dull affairs, and it is quite apparent from them that the poor lad was oppressed by conscientious desires to live on six francs a day and do his duty by foreign tongues. Italian lessons he added to his studies in French. The hubble-bubble of Parisian life took his breath away at first, and he scarcely recovered it during his stay. Once he called to see Jules Janin, bearing an introduction, and climbing up five flights of stairs in the Quartier Latin to reach the critic, who was found seated at his writing-table in the centre of a study, or *salon*, or what you will—he had but one reception room. The little Frenchman started up with such hospitable effusion that the fresh ink spurted from his pen into the visitor's face. He called out loudly for some one. A young lady entered, and was introduced—Madame Janin. And now that Madame was come, Monsieur Janin said they would have dinner forthwith. Where? The host with the zest of a hungry man of letters getting rid of his toil, swept everything off his writing-table into a corner of the room; *instanter* a little maid-servant entered with cloth and soup-tureen, and the banquet commenced. How gay was the critic! and how Madame laughed! and how the guest blushed sometimes! The laughter lasted, and the blushes came and went, till dessert was placed on the table, and then Janin deviated into sense, and not only discussed literary affairs

in a way that delighted the student, but gave him some useful hints about making the most of his sojourn in the city. The chat lasted till the lamps were lighted in the streets, when Janin took his new acquaintance for a walk along the *quais*, and the pair spent three charming hours by the Seine. The sentimental biographer might make a fine thing out of this tableau—the moon (for there was moonlight) silvering the pavement under the feet of these two notable human creatures, one in all the maturity of the small-raced Parisian—industrious, witty, versatile, unscrupulous, pleasure-loving, dissolute, a man who would make himself remarkable in any circumstances for talent and *insouciance;* the other taller and rather gaunt, grave in his very smiles, still seeming to have in his ears a dim resonance of preachers' voices in New England meeting-houses—frank in his glances, and hopeful in his talk, religiously possessed, above all, with the need to live simply and think much. After the manner of good Saxon-blooded youths, he astonished such as Jules Janin by his ignorance regarding many social problems. Yet, phlegmatic as he then seems to have been (how we do long for some moving sigh of ambition or love in this stalwart New Englander!), Longfellow's was the pure mind that would look back on its history as Wordsworth looked back on his own :

> "Not in vain
> By day or starlight, thus from my first dawn
> Of Childhood didst thou intertwine for me
> The passions that build up our human soul;
> Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
> But with high objects, with enduring things,

With life and nature; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear—until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of our hearts."

Ten years after the little dinner in the Quartier Latin, the American found himself once more in Paris, and met Jules Janin on the Boulevard des Italiens. He was asked to dinner again. The host was as kind as ever; the house was large, and furnished in sumptuous disorder. Madame Janin of course made her appearance.

"How changed!" whispered Longfellow, by and by, to the host; "I should not have recognized her."

"How?" cried Janin, eagerly. "When did you meet her?"

"Why, it must have been ten years ago."

"Great heavens! Are you serious?" said the Frenchman, with a queer look. And then after a pause he added, "Who can count the Mesdames Janin since then?"

"And this one——" said Longfellow, coldly.

"Ah, bah! This time, *mon cher*, I have been caught myself, and the real Madame Janin stands before you; but——" and here the voice seemed different from the voice that cracked the jokes in the Quartier Latin—"nothing before *her* about that little dinner, you know, or that *ménage!*"

To the story Longfellow was accustomed to add this sentence: "Janin thought it a fine joke, but I see no beauty or decency in such an irregular life, although he had many a laugh at what he called my puritanical innocence."

This innocence was as essential in Longfellow's nature as oil in the feathers of a bird; evil poured away from him like water off a duck's back. Naturally his good mother fondly worried herself about him, but hinted her anxieties in the encouraging form of trustful expressions. "It is true, Henry," she writes, "your parents have great confidence in your uprightness, and in that purity of mind which will instantly take alarm on coming in contact with anything vicious or unworthy. *We* have confidence; but *you* must be careful and watchful. But enough. I do not mistrust you." Henry writes back in such a way as to lay all his parents' fears at rest. At length, on the 19th of February, 1827, he rather joyfully announces his departure for Spain:—

"It is now exactly eight months since my arrival in Paris. And setting all boasting aside, I must say that I am well satisfied with the knowledge I have acquired of the French language. My friends all tell me that I have a good pronunciation, and although I do not pretend to anything like perfection, yet I am confident that I have done well. I cannot imagine who told you that six months was enough for the French. I shall leave Paris for Spain on Wednesday, day after to-morrow. My health continues excellent."

Among all these letters there is but one at all remarkable for any descriptive power, and this was afterwards expanded into a paper which shall be quoted from "Outre-Mer," by and by. He makes no reflections of value on French life; the notes he jots down do not suggest much that is picturesque or characteristic; and

even the Louvre, with its boundless wealth of ancient and modern art, is dismissed with this irritatingly raw remark: "In the Louvre there is a painting of Venus which is an exact portrait of Miss K——." Here it may be noticed that, although he developed a considerable taste for sculpture, Longfellow all through life exhibited indifference to the works of the great painters.

It is well known that scenes and incidents which make little impression upon us during our childhood may recur in our memory with power; and the poem quoted in our first chapter is only one of many instances proving that this process often occurred in Longfellow's mind with the happiest results. The reproductive workings of his mental nature went further, however, than they do in most men; and both in prose and poetry he often, after the lapse of years, manufactured into verse facts of mature experience that in a less retentive memory would have been allowed to pass out of consciousness for ever. Thus it was that, although the notes he made during his first continental travels were devoid of general interest, he was enabled, on returning to America, to recogitate his Eastern experiences, and faithfully reproduce their details in really graphic style.

After a prolonged tour in Spain,[1] during which the language of the country was studied daily, the professor-elect started from Marseilles for Italy on December 15, 1827, travelling by way of the Riviera. This last journey was made in the company of George Washington

[1] At Madrid, he had the pleasure of becoming personally acquainted with Washington Irving, then in his fortieth year, and engaged on his "Life of Christopher Columbus."

Greene, a young fellow-countryman who remained one of Longfellow's closest friends till death severed the two men in their old age. Staying far into the summer at Rome, young Longfellow caught the malarial fever, and was only rescued by skilful nursing from the consequences of his imprudence. From Italy his letters were frequent, as they were a year thereafter, when he wrote from Germany. Still, we find little in the letters, or in the journals kept up contemporaneously. We might be apt to think from them that the writer was destined to be a cultivated Portland lawyer after all, or a conscientious teacher of languages, and nothing more.

At length the traveller returned to his native land, and in September, 1829, Bowdoin was able to confer the full dignity of Professor of Modern Languages on one of the youngest scholars, probably the most accomplished scholar, in America. Longfellow went into residence at Brunswick almost immediately. He was now twenty-two, handsome, well-mannered, and altogether remarkably lovable and full of promise. At once he set to work with his classes in earnest, and, finding no French grammar that pleased him, he translated one—L'Homond's—and also brought out a selection of "Proverbes Dramatiques," and a Spanish Reader. He had assistants to teach the elements of the languages, but made it a point to watch his pupils at every stage of their studies, and tradition tells that there never was a more gentlemanly, a more industrious, or more beloved professor at Bowdoin than the first Professor of Modern Languages. He rose at six in the morning, and as soon as dressed, heard French recitation by the "sophomores."

At seven he breakfasted, and then he was his own master till eleven, when he gave a lesson in Spanish to the juniors. Then came lunch, with half an hour in the library amid his pupils. At five he had another French class; at six he took coffee; then he walked and visited till nine; studied and corrected exercises till twelve; and so to bed. This was his daily routine, in which he found time to write out systematic courses of lectures on the French, Spanish, and Italian literatures. His work was really all-absorbing, and it never reached a higher rate of remuneration than the salary of a thousand dollars per annum.

In April of 1831 the Professor began a connection with *The North American Review*, and in the following September he married a beautiful girl, Mary Storer Potter, daughter of his father's neighbour at Portland. And now he was to relish four perfect years—years of scholarly labour in a congenial position, carried forward in a happy home, with a refined and affectionate wife always watching beside him. One entry in his diary, redolent of enjoyment, pictures him sitting at his table by the window through which come soft morning breezes that make him dream of Spain. The tesselated shadow of honeysuckle lies motionless on the study floor, as if it were a figure on the carpet; and the fragrance of the wild brier and the mock-orange pervades the room. Unseen birds sing in the trees, and their shadows betray them as they flit above the window. The grateful murmur of bees, the cooing of doves on the roof, and the whirring of a little humming-bird that has its nest in the honeysuckle, send up a sound of joy to meet the rising

sun. Ah! this kind of life is better than Jules Janin's in the Quartier Latin. And probably if Jules Janin's diary has been preserved, and was truthfully posted up, it would not read like this:—

"*November* 29, 1832. Five o'clock in the morning. Commence the preparatory reading for an essay on the History of the Spanish Language; beginning with the *Origines de la Lengua Española* . . . por Don Gregorio Mayáns y Siscár. Finished the first volume. In the evening read four chapters of the first book of Livy.

"30th. Rose at half-past five. Ran over the second volume of Mayáns; commenced the second book of Aldrete's *Origen y Principio de la Lengua Castellana.* Read five chapters in Livy, and the fourth and fifth acts of Ben Jonson's *Alchemist;* a fine comedy, though too broad,—the better suited to the prurient taste of his age, of which his noble genius should have been the castigator, not the pander.

"*December* 1. Commenced a new introduction to my Phi Beta Kappa poem, to be delivered in Cambridge in August next. I am flattered that the committee of the Society should have thought of me as Poet. Finished Aldrete. He is altogether too diffuse for my taste. His work wants perspective; all objects seem of equal size, and he devotes as much time to points of minor consideration as to the most important. Cortes read to me chapters xv.–xvii. of Don Quixote. It is a pleasure to hear it read by a Spaniard. One might believe that the Knight of the Rueful Countenance and his Squire were talking with us.

"2d. Sunday. A bright sunshine after yesterday's snowstorm. Read Massillon's sermon, *Sur les Tentations des Grands;* one of Wieland's Psalms; Livy, three chapters.

"3d. Revised and corrected a paper for 'The Schoolmaster,' entitled, 'Saturday Afternoon.' Read Moratin's Comedy, *El Si de las Niñas*, one of the best pieces of the modern theatre. In the evening, four chapters of Livy; among them chapter xxix. of Book first, containing the beautiful description of the destruction of Alba.

"4th. Ran over a Dissertation on the best method of studying the languages of the Bible, translated from the German by Professor Stuart. Livy, four chapters.

"11th. Wrote an apostrophe to Truth, part of my Phi Beta Kappa poem. Ran through the *Glosa Famosa sobre las Coplas de Don Jorge Manrique*, by Luis Perez; stupid enough, though in some parts ingenious."

It may be supposed that these tranquil studies were their own reward: but on December 1, 1834, the authorities at Harvard University offered him the position of Smith Professor of Modern Languages, as successor to Mr. Ticknor, suggesting that he might take a year in Europe, if he liked, on assuming these duties. Ticknor and Longfellow had been friends for some time, and this proposition from Harvard was all of the elder scholar's arranging. The salary was to be fifteen hundred dollars per annum.

Longfellow gratefully accepted this chance. Meanwhile he had in 1833 published his first book—"Coplas de Don Jorge Manrique, translated from the Spanish, with

an Introductory Essay." This is a volume of some ninety pages. In 1833, also, appeared a thin pamphlet called "Outre-Mer; a Pilgrimage beyond the Sea: Part I." This was brought out with marbled covers, in large type. It was as like the parts of the "Sketch Book" as possible. Now the first attempt Longfellow made to describe his European travels in print had been in five papers contributed to *The New England Magazine* (principally in 1832), under the title of "The Schoolmaster." These might be termed the first sketches for a book of travels. The part of "Outre-Mer" that appeared in 1833 went over much the same ground as "The Schoolmaster;" and Part II. followed in 1834. But here the proposed *brochures* stopped, so far as the serial form was concerned. The various chapters of "Outre-Mer" eventually saw the light in 1835, contained in two volumes; and the work attained popularity rapidly. It has never been widely read in this country, however, and is now almost a dead letter with us. Avowedly an imitation of Washington Irving's methods of description, "Outre-Mer" may be pronounced equal in literary merit to the average of work in the "Sketch Book." Irving's lighter touches are absent, for Longfellow never developed any considerable fund of humour. But in addition to uniform grace of style, "Outre-Mer" had the advantage of going over much ground never before described by an American: some of it, indeed, almost new to British literature. The Italian portions inevitably suggest comparison with Goethe's "Italiänische Reise," and of course suffer by the comparison. Goethe's descent into Italy had nearly as much influence upon

European literature as the invasion of the Goths. He was the true king of the Goths, and swept down so conqueringly upon that sunny land that he rifled its dearest treasures, carrying back to Germany in his mind more classic riches than any twenty minds in Italy itself contained. In the "Italiänische Reise" — although the literary workmanship is far from being Goethe's best— we constantly feel this attack; Goethe applies his thought to what he sees, as a solvent, like Hannibal (in the myth) melting the rocks of the Alps with vinegar. No sense of power such as this comes to readers of Longfellow's "Outre-Mer." He sets forth upon his journeys in the spirit of a pilgrim, rather than in that of a spoiler. The student curious in etymologies may remember that our word "saunter" is said to be derived from the phrase of the Middle Ages, which referred to those leisurely travellers who took years to journey through Europe *à la Sainte Terre*. Using the word, then, nearly in its primary sense, we may say that in "Outre-Mer" Longfellow saunters through many lands, with eyes and ears well open for all the gentler experiences of beauty that may be encountered therein.

It is in this pleasant book that Longfellow atones for the want of literary merit displayed in his early European letters and journals. Every page is a slightly coloured transcript from his actual experiences, and to show how much material he had to draw upon, and how interestingly he could utilize it, we may quote two passages from "Outre-Mer." In the first, a description of French rustic life, we find the young Professor imitating Goldsmith :—

"I was one morning called to my window by the sound of rustic music. I looked out, and beheld a procession of villagers advancing along the road, attired in gay dresses, and marching merrily on in the direction of the church. I soon perceived that it was a marriage-festival. The procession was led by a long orang-outang of a man, in a straw hat and a white dimity bob-coat, playing on an asthmatic clarionet, from which he contrived to blow unearthly sounds, ever and anon squeaking off at right angles from his tune, and winding up with a grand flourish on the guttural notes. Behind him, led by his little boy, came the blind fiddler, his honest features glowing with all the hilarity of a rustic bridal, and, as he stumbled along, sawing away upon his fiddle till he made all crack again. Then came the happy bridegroom, dressed in his Sunday suit of blue, with a large nosegay in his button-hole; and close beside him his blushing bride, with downcast eyes, clad in a white robe and slippers, and wearing a wreath of white roses in her hair. The friends and relatives brought up the procession; and a troop of village urchins came shouting along in the rear, scrambling among themselves for the largesse of sous and sugar-plums that now and then issued in large handfuls from the pockets of a lean man in black, who seemed to officiate as master of ceremonies on the occasion. I gazed on the procession till it was out of sight; and when the last wheeze of the clarionet died upon my ear, I could not help thinking how happy were they who were thus to dwell together in the peaceful bosom of their native village, far from the gilded misery and the pestilential vices of the town.

"On the evening of the same day, I was sitting by the window, enjoying the freshness of the air and the beauty and stillness of the hour, when I heard the distant and solemn hymn of the Catholic burial-service, at first so faint and indistinct that it seemed an illusion. It rose mournfully on the hush of evening,—died gradually away,—then ceased. Then it rose again, nearer and more distinct, and soon after a funeral procession appeared, and passed directly beneath my window. It was led by a priest, bearing the banner of the church, and followed by two boys, holding long flambeaux in their hands. Next came a double file of priests in their surplices, each with a missal in one hand, and a lighted wax taper in the other, chanting the funeral dirge at intervals,—now pausing, and then again taking up the mournful burden of their lamentation, accompanied by others, who played upon a rude kind of bassoon, with a dismal and wailing sound. Then followed various symbols of the church, and the bier borne on the shoulders of four men. The coffin was covered with a velvet pall, and a chaplet of white flowers lay upon it, indicating that the deceased was unmarried. A few of the villagers came behind, clad in mourning robes, and bearing lighted tapers. The procession passed slowly along the same street that in the morning had been thronged by the gay bridal company. A melancholy train of thought forced itself home upon my mind. The joys and sorrows of this world are so strikingly mingled! Our mirth and grief are brought so mournfully in contact! We laugh while others weep,—and others rejoice when we are sad! The light heart and the heavy walk side by side and go about together! Beneath the same roof are

spread the wedding-feast and the funeral-pall! The bridal-song mingles with the burial-hymn! One goes to the marriage-bed, another to the grave; and all is mutable, uncertain, and transitory."

The next passage comes from the chapter entitled "Rome in Midsummer." The unsanitary, but beautiful aquatic sport described as going on in the Piazza Navona is no longer to be observed at Rome:—

"My mornings are spent in visiting the wonders of Rome, in studying the miracles of ancient and modern art, or in reading at the public libraries. We breakfast at noon, and dine at eight in the evening. After dinner comes the conversazione, enlivened with music, and the meeting of travellers, artists, and literary men from every quarter of the globe. At midnight, when the crowd is gone, I retire to my chamber, and, poring over the gloomy pages of Dante, or 'Bandello's laughing tale,' protract my nightly vigil till the morning star is in the sky.

"Our windows look out upon the square, which circumstance is a source of infinite enjoyment to me. Directly in front, with its fantastic belfries and swelling dome, rises the church of St. Agnes; and sitting by the open window, I note the busy scene below, enjoy the cool air of morning and evening, and even feel the freshness of the fountain, as its waters leap in mimic cascades down the sides of the rock.

* * * * *

"The Piazza Navona is the chief market-place of Rome, and on market-days is filled with a noisy crowd of

the Roman populace, and the peasantry from the neighbouring villages of Albano and Frascati. At such times the square presents an animated and curious scene. The gaily decked stalls,—the piles of fruits and vegetables,—the pyramids of flowers,—the various costumes of the peasantry,—the constant movements of the vast, fluctuating crowd, and the deafening clamour of their discordant voices, that rise louder than the roar of the loud ocean,—all this is better than a play to me, and gives me amusements when naught else has power to amuse.

"Every Saturday afternoon in the sultry month of August, this spacious square is converted into a lake, by stopping the conduit-pipes which carry off the water of the fountains. Vehicles of every description, axle-deep, drive to and fro across the mimic lake; a dense crowd gathers around its margin, and a thousand tricks excite the loud laughter of the idle populace. Here is a fellow groping with a stick after his seafaring hat; there another splashing in the water in pursuit of a mischievous spaniel, who is swimming away with his shoe; while from a neighbouring balcony a noisy burst of military music fills the air, and gives fresh animation to the scene of mirth. This is one of the popular festivals of midsummer in Rome, and the merriest of them all. It is a kind of carnival unmasked; and many a popular bard, many a *poeta di dozzina*, invokes this day the plebeian Muse of the market-place to sing in high-sounding rhyme, '*Il Lago di Piazza Navona.*'

"I have before me one of these sublime effusions. It describes the square,—the crowd,—the rattling carriages,—the lake,—the fountain, raised by 'the superhuman

genius of Bernini,'—the lion,—the sea-horse, and the triton grasping the dolphin's tail. 'Half the grand square,' thus sings the poet, 'where Rome with food is satiate, was changed into a lake, around whose margin stood the Roman people, pleased with soft idleness and merry holyday, like birds upon the margin of a limpid brook. Up and down drove car and chariot; and the women trembled for fear of the deep water; though merry were the young, and well, I ween, had they been borne away to unknown shores by the bull that bore away Europa, they would neither have wept nor screamed!'

* * * * *

"On the eastern slope of the Janiculum, now called, from its yellow sands, Montorio, or the Golden Mountain, stands the fountain of Acqua Paola, the largest and most abundant of the Roman fountains. It is a small Ionic temple, with six columns of reddish granite in front, a spacious hall and chambers within, and a garden with a terrace in the rear. Beneath the pavement, a torrent of water from the ancient aqueducts of Trajan, and from the lakes of Bracciano and Martignano, leaps forth in three beautiful cascades, and from the overflowing basin rushes down the hill-side to turn the busy wheels of a dozen mills.

"The key of this little fairy palace is in our hands, and as often as once a week we pass the day there, amid the odour of its flowers, the rushing sound of its waters, and the enchantments of poetry and music. How pleasantly the sultry hours steal by! Cool comes the summer wind from the Tiber's mouth at Ostia. Above us is a sky without a cloud; beneath us, the magnificent

panorama of Rome and the Campagna, bounded by the Abruzzi and the sea. Glorious scene! one glance at thee would move the dullest soul,—one glance can melt the painter and the poet into tears!

"In the immediate neighbourhood of the fountain are many objects worthy of the stranger's notice. A bow-shot down the hill-side towards the city stands the convent of San Pietro in Montorio; and in the cloister of this convent is a small, round, Doric temple, built upon the spot which an ancient tradition points out as the scene of St. Peter's martyrdom. In the opposite direction the road leads you over the shoulder of the hill, and out through the city-gate to gardens and villas beyond. Passing beneath a lofty arch of Trajan's aqueduct, an ornamented gateway on the left admits you to the Villa Pamfili-Doria, built on the western declivity of the hill. This is the largest and most magnificent of the numerous villas that crowd the immediate environs of Rome. Its spacious terraces, its marble statues, its woodlands and green alleys, its lake, and waterfalls, and fountains, give it an air of courtly splendour and of rural beauty, which realizes the beau-ideal of a suburban villa.

"This is our favourite resort when we have passed the day at the fountain, and the afternoon shadows begin to fall. There we sit on the broad marble steps of the terrace, gaze upon the varied landscape stretching to the misty sea, or ramble beneath the leafy dome of the woodland and along the margin of the lake—

> 'And drop a pebble to see it sink
> Down in those depths so calm and cool.'

"O, did we but know when we were happy! Could

the restless, feverish, ambitious heart be still, but for a moment still, and yield itself, without one further-aspiring throb, to its enjoyment,—then were I happy,—yea, thrice happy! But no; this fluttering, struggling, and imprisoned spirit beats the bars of its golden cage,—disdains the silken fetter; it will not close its eye and fold its wings: as if time were not swift enough, its swifter thoughts outstrip his rapid flight, and onward, onward do they wing their way to the distant mountains, to the fleeting clouds of the future; and yet I know, that ere long, weary, and wayworn, and disappointed, they shall return to nestle in the bosom of the past!

"This day, also, I have passed at Acqua Paola. From the garden terrace I watched the setting sun, as, wrapt in golden vapour, he passed to other climes. A friend from my native land was with me; and, as we spake of home, a liquid star stood trembling like a tear upon the closing eyelid of the day."

Here we end with one of the similes with which Longfellow sinned against taste occasionally. It is, at least, a doubtful simile, although not so distinctly bad as the metaphor about the stars being "forget-me-nots of the angels." It is worth noticing, however, that Longfellow had hardly yet recognized his vocation to poetry, and did not seek imagery so persistently as he afterwards did. For this reason the style of "Outre-Mer" is really much better than that of "Hyperion's" overladen periods.

CHAPTER V.

IT was not easy for any man to succeed Ticknor as a Professor of Languages: for that gentleman, although his literary performances have shown more industry than originality, was certainly one of the best-informed students of European tongues and literature in his time. In order that he might enter on his duties at Harvard with confidence, it was necessary for Longfellow to make himself still more intimately acquainted with German thought and books, and his desire was to add to this knowledge a mastery of Scandinavian languages. Accordingly he proceeded to Europe with his wife in April of 1835.

First of all, on arrival in the East, Longfellow gave himself a pleasant holiday of three weeks in London, to which city he had already paid a flying visit ere concluding his former European tour. As became a man now of some note, furnished with good introductions, he went into the best society in London; and his days and nights in the English metropolis were full of intellectual gaiety. He breakfasted with Sir John Bowring; dined with the Lockharts; at Babbage's met Jane Porter, Lady Morgan, Abraham Hayward, and the sister beauties—Mrs. Black-

wood and Lady Seymour. At Lady Dudley Stuart's he listened to the singing of Rubini and Grisi; and one day Carlyle came to talk delightfully to the poet and his wife for half-an-hour. Carlyle had them home to tea, and took them to visit Chantrey's studio. On the whole, the Longfellows were most struck with Mrs. Carlyle, whom they described as "a lovely woman, with simple and pleasing manners," and as accomplished as modest. During this London sojourn Mr. Bentley arranged for an English edition of "Outre-Mer," and when this appeared, *The Spectator* was not long in declaring that "either the author of the 'Sketch Book' has received a warning, or there are two Richmonds in the field."

In June, the American Professor found himself a wakeful inhabitant of cities far north, on which the sun hardly set. Sweden altogether satisfied his mind. At Lydköping he read books in the public squares towards midnight, waiting to see the watchman stretch himself towards the four quarters of heaven, on the church-tower, crying: "Ho, watchman, ho! Twelve the clock has stricken. God keep our town from firebrand, and the enemy's hand." As he journeyed through the land, he never tired of the recurrent groves of pine and drooping fir-trees with rose-coloured cones; the little crowds of white-haired boys and girls about the school doors; the wooden houses all painted red, and the calm paleness of the night, "which like a silver clasp, united the day with yesterday." The peasantry, however, struck him as peculiarly cloddish; and he wondered at the clergymen smoking in the streets, drinking punch in the public-houses, and playing cards on Sundays.

The Swedish tongue Longfellow studied at Stockholm, with Professor Lignel of Upsala. He found the language easy to read, and soft and musical like the lowland Scotch, but difficult to speak grammatically. Finnish he acquired from a poet-parson named Mellin; and afterwards at Copenhagen he read Danish with Mr. Bolling, librarian of that city.

So passed nearly six months, until the time came for descending to Holland for the Dutch. The tour was made by Amsterdam, the Hague and Delft: but in Rotterdam, Longfellow's wife fell ill, and on the 29th of November she died there, peacefully, but after long suffering. This bereavement was one of the two great shocks which made ravages in the poet's inner happiness, and the extent of which he concealed, even from his closest friends, by a resolute reticence. We all know, however, how beautiful a sigh escaped him, when he endeared the memory of Mary his wife to all the world, in "Footsteps of Angels."

> "Oh, though oft depressed and lonely,
> All my fears are laid aside,
> If I but remember only,
> Such as these have lived and died."

It was in Heidelberg chiefly, that the widower sought distraction from his lonely thoughts. On the way thither he had stopped to spend a day at Bonn with August Wilhelm Schlegel, whose pomposity seems on this occasion to have thawed several degrees. At Heidelberg the traveller established himself in the house of Frau Himmelhahn, near the end of the Hauptstrasse, towards the Karls Thor. From his window he could look over

the brown windings of the Neckar, as he afterwards looked from his cosy study at Cambridge over the sweep of the clearer river Charles. Mittermaier, the lawyer, leader of the Liberals, was very kind to him at Heidelberg; there also he formed friendships with Gervinus, the Shakespearean scholar; Schlosser, the Professor of Modern History—and butt of De Quincey's ridicule; Reichlin-Meldegg, who was lecturing on Schiller; Thibaut, who discoursed on the Pandects; and that Pope of the rationalist clergymen, Dr. Paulus. Furthermore, it was at Heidelberg that Longfellow first met his great countryman, Bryant; and Mr. Samuel Ward, of New York, became a most valuable acquaintance. With the Bryants and Mr. Ward, or with a Russian, Baron von Ramm, he daily walked about the pleasant environs of the old town, and to Handschuhsheim, to the mill at Rohrbach, to the tower of Königsstuhl, or to the heights of the Wolfsbrunnen. The loveliness of the place, and the quiet strength of German thought, he was absorbing every moment; but each day furnished him with settled hours of dogged study, in which Goethe, Herder, Tieck, Hoffman, and Richter were the spirits whom he conjured.

Next July, Longfellow was in the Tyrol, where the pines, and timber houses, and fences, and bridges, and fields of Indian corn, all reminded him of New England; and from the Tyrol he passed to the Alps of Switzerland. It was at Interlaken, in Switzerland, that Longfellow met Mr. Appleton, a cheery and rich fellow-countryman, with whom were his wife and family. The Appletons felt drawn to their slender and courtly-mannered Harvard Professor, and he went about with them a great

deal, quietly investigating the mental characteristics of Mr. Appleton's fair daughter. Thoughts of her were to flit about him in dreaming and in working hours for the next few years; but at this time they parted as ordinary friends. In December, 1836, Longfellow had returned to America, and entered upon his professorship.

Harvard is of course the intellectual glory of the States. In 1636 the nucleus of the College was created, and two years later, John Harvard, an English Nonconformist clergyman, bequeathed to the institution a library of 300 books, and £800 in cash. In 1873, the chartered University of Harvard, beside its building, grounds, and extensive library, possessed about three-quarters of a million sterling in vested funds, twelve hundred students, and one hundred and ten professors of all grades. When Longfellow began to lecture here, the college in Harvard Square was the only structure of note in the place, Cambridge being but a village, to which most of the students walked along a three-mile road from "town," which was Boston. The college had just celebrated its two-hundredth anniversary. Josiah Quincy was its revered President; E. T. Channing was Professor of English Literature; Charles Beck, of Latin; Felton, of Greek; Henry Ware, of Divinity; and Charles Sumner, Lecturer in the Law School. Not far off, lived Washington Allston, then the best painter his country had produced—and a little of a poet also. Longfellow consorted chiefly with the Greek Professor—Cornelius Conway Felton, a warm-hearted, jovial scholar—and three other young and rising men joined themselves to him; the three being Sumner, George Stillman Hillard, and Henry

R. Cleveland. These friends, all of an age, resolved themselves into an association for the promotion of nice dinners and good digestive talk, calling themselves the "Five of Clubs." As they grew more powerful in literature they helped each other in the reviews, and a man who read Felton's paper on "Evangeline," in *The North American Review*, pencilled under Longfellow's name, "Insured in the Mutual."

These were days when some of our British authors were great dandies. Bulwer Lytton did not assort his paragraphs more carefully than he studied the pattern of his waistcoats; and Disraeli, who dressed in London like a creation of Count D'Orsay's pictorial imagination, fascinated Europe during his first tour with an armoury of dress walking-sticks. We need not feel much surprise, then, to learn that Longfellow figured at Harvard as a sort of fashion-plate for the youth of the place to admire. He makes the Baron say to Paul Flemming (that is, Longfellow) in "Hyperion": "The ladies already begin to call you Wilhelm Meister, and they say that your gloves are a shade too light for a strictly virtuous young man." This is not the kind of smart saying that Longfellow's mind could invent, and almost certainly was a real remark of the Russian, Von Ramm. Ward writes to him, after he had left Europe, "I have for you an Endymion waistcoat better suited to your style than mine," and a Mrs. Craigie at Cambridge, of whom we are to hear immediately, vaguely distrusted him because he looked too gay. He himself wrote to Sumner, when Sumner was abroad, "If you have any tendency to 'curl your hair and wear gloves,' like Edgar in 'Lear,' do it

before your return." Now this liking to be well-dressed was in truth not so much an affectation in Longfellow, as a sign that he lacked affectation. His was a mind that was neat in all its workings, and even exquisite; it required its external circumstances to be neat also, for comfort, and he was not the man to go about with his shoes untied, his hose ungartered, and all about him betokening a careless desolation, as if by these means to gain more credit for concealed beauties of a vast mind. *Poète ou pas poète, j'aime du linge propre.* Cæsar tramped along by his men on foot in preference to riding luxuriously; but he always carried with him the little lozenges of ivory, wherewith the tesselated floor of his tent could be put together; and his toilet was exquisite. There was not a man in America who worked harder than the Harvard Professor of Modern Languages; but this was no reason why he should allow any man to be better dressed. To the end of his life he was punctilious about his appearance. After he had been staying with Dickens, that ever-whimsical brother-in-letters wrote to him: "McDowall the bootmaker, Beale the hosier, Laffin the trowsers-maker, and Blackmore the coat-cutter, have all been at the point of death; but have slowly recovered. The medical gentlemen agreed that it was exhaustion occasioned by early rising—to wait upon you at those unholy hours!"

At first Professor Longfellow occupied rooms in Professors' Row at Cambridge—now called Kirkland Street; but ere long he found a better home in Craigie House. Craigie House will be revered in Cambridge while its wooden walls can be held together; for it has

been the abode of George Washington as well as of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. It was built about 1760 by a wealthy Colonel Vassall, and was confiscated by the State when its owner joined the King's side during the Revolution. After the Battle of Bunker's Hill, Washington fixed upon it for his head-quarters, and here he remained nine months till the evacuation of Boston by the British troops. Then the house passed through several hands, until a retired "Apothecary-General," called Andrew Craigie, made it the scene of lavish hospitalities, which were accepted by guests so distinguished as Talleyrand and the Duke of Kent. When Mr. Craigie died, he left an eccentric widow well-nigh penniless; and the lady was forced to eke out her income by letting her house in apartments. Thus was Longfellow enabled to cherish the notion of taking up quarters in rooms hallowed by memories of his country's father. When he made his first application to Mrs. Craigie, she would have nothing to do with him, thinking that so fashionable a young gentleman would not be likely to prove a quiet lodger. However he told her who he was, and then her manner changed, for Harvard College was to her a sort of Shechinah, and moreover, she had read "Outre-Mer." But still she was inclined to stickle a little. As each suite of rooms was shown to the visitor, and he became more and more impressed with the respectable solidity of the old-fashioned mansion, with its wood-carvings, and lofty ceilings, and deep windows, the proprietor said: "But you cannot have this set." At last Longfellow was ushered into a room in the front of the house, overlooking goodly meadows

and the river Charles. It was a summer's day and the cool shadows that lay about the room made it appear all the larger, while not a sound without broke the peace of the place, and even the branches of elms that shaded the windows looked as still as if they were painted on the glass. "This is a room you can have," said the old turbaned lady called Mrs. Craigie. The visitor at once expressed his pleasure at receiving the offer, but his gratification must have been doubled as she added to her offer the comment that "This was General Washington's Chamber." And in General Washington's chamber he set up his book-cases, and abode.

Longfellow's duties at the University did not tax him as much as he had been taxed at Bowdoin. He had to deliver one lecture each week all through the year; to lecture twice a week besides in summer, on *Belles Lettres;* and to superintend the instructors in languages, personally examining each student once a month. This was full employment to a professor who looked at his work conscientiously, as Longfellow did; and from the following sketch of his first year's weekly lectures we can see that he did not shrink from making his students travel over much ground.

1. Introduction. History of the French Language.
2. The other Languages of the South of Europe.
3. History of the Northern, or Gothic, Languages.
4. Anglo-Saxon Literature.
5 and 6. Swedish Literature.
7. Sketch of German Literature.
8, 9, 10. Life and Writings of Goethe.
11 and 12. Life and Writings of Jean Paul Richter.

About this time Hawthorne pleasantly renewed touch with his classmate in this interesting note—

"SALEM, *March* 7, 1837.

"DEAR SIR,—The agent of the American Stationers' Company will send you a copy of a book entitled 'Twice-Told Tales,' of which, as a classmate, I venture to request your acceptance. We were not, it is true, so well acquainted at college that I can plead an absolute right to inflict my twice-told tediousness upon you; but I have often regretted that we were not better known to each other, and have been glad of your success in literature and in more important matters. I know not whether you are aware that I have made a great many idle attempts in the way of Magazine and Annual scribbling. The present volumes contain such articles as seemed best worth offering to the public a second time; and I should like to flatter myself that they would repay you some part of the pleasure which I have derived from your own 'Outre-Mer.'

"Your obedient servant,

"NATH. HAWTHORNE."

The response to this was a kindly article in *The North American Review*, and ever after, the intercourse between the two men was marked by respect and generous helpfulness, although circumstances did not allow them to enter on very close communion. They once formed a plan of writing together a book of Fairy Tales, but the notion was never realized.

The Rev. E. E. Hale has given us a sketch of the way in which Longfellow and his students used to work together:—

"As it happened, the regular recitation-rooms of the college were all in use, and we met him in a sort of parlour, carpeted, hung with pictures, and otherwise handsomely furnished, which was, I believe, called 'the Corporation Room.' We sat round a mahogany table, which was reported to be meant for the dinners of the Fellows; and the whole affair had the aspect of a friendly gathering in a private house, in which the study of German was the amusement of the occasion. He began with familiar ballads—read them to us, and made us read them to him. Of course, we soon committed them to memory without meaning to, and I think this was probably part of his theory. At the same time we were learning the paradigms by rote. His regular duty was the oversight of four or more instructors who were teaching French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese to two or three hundred undergraduates. We never knew when he might look in on a recitation and virtually conduct it. We were delighted to have him come. We all knew he was a poet, and were proud to have him in the college, but at the same time we respected him as a man of affairs."

And here we come upon the truth that was lighting up the man's life. Having worked hard and having sorrowed, having loved and lost, and now being in the hale maturity of his intellectual being, he felt himself destined for something even beyond the exploration of literature's riches. His students had found out the secret. Seated in his cozy study, at the table between the eastern and southern windows, he watched the flow of the Charles, shadowed among woodlands, and "the generous giver" murmured

songs into his ear. All nature, seen from these windows, was laid under contribution by his nascent poetic faculties, so that even to the placid meadows he could say as Emerson did—

> "A second crop thine acres yield,
> Which I gather in a song."

At night he could see from this vantage point "the red planet Mars;" and while Emerson in such contemplation would have told us sadly—

> "Stars help us with a mystery,
> That we could never spell,"

Longfellow turned to his desk and wrote—

> "Within my breast there is no light
> But the cold light of stars;
> I give the first watch of the night
> To the red planet Mars.
> The star of the unconquered will,
> He rises in my breast,
> Serene and resolute and still,
> And calm and self-possessed."

This is hardly yet in the poet's most fanciful style, but the mind that expressed it was strong, and turned joyfully towards the future.

In the afternoons Felton and Sumner, or either of the two remaining members of the "Five of Clubs," would come to dinner in Washington's room, and thereafter Longfellow would take from his desk such verses as these, and they would be much discussed. From the first he exhibited freedom from irritation at adverse criticism, and this was given often enough throughout many succeeding years.

Could an earthly being enjoy life more than Longfellow must then have enjoyed it? Healthy in body, braced by years of mental discipline, honoured by every one who knew him, placed beyond the pressure of anxiety about money, cozily housed, visited constantly by a few men as noble-hearted as they were clever, and thrilling every now and again, in the quiet of his study, with ambitions of becoming the great singer of his country, and with intuitions as to his growing powers of song! This surely was happiness. One thing his nature lacked, as the sighing conclusion of a letter to George Greene shows:—

"And now rises up before me a picture of heaven upon earth, which I met with a few days ago in Jean Paul Richter, the most magnificent of the German prose writers. Listen to his words! 'A look into a pure, loving eye; a word without falseness to a bride without falseness; and then a soft-breathing breast in which there is nothing but Paradise, a sermon, and an evening prayer.'"

Whether or not we can make out for Longfellow a claim to genius of the first order, it is not to be denied that as a man of flesh and blood he was so eminently human, that throughout the whole range of social pleasure he valued and needed stimulus. He was a good eater, and a judge of wines. Once, when asked what he had most admired in England, he replied—"Bass's ale." He liked the opera and the play and dances—all forms of social diversion, and had he never attained poetic fame,

he could have been happy enough. Yet in the early years of the Craigie House life, we see what was amiss. The voice of a woman never spoke to him lovingly.

The first poem privately put before Longfellow's friends and critics at Craigie House was "Flowers."

> "Spake full well, in language quaint and olden,
> One who dwelleth by the castled Rhine;
> When he called the flowers, so blue and golden,
> Stars, that in earth's firmament did shine."

He who thus spake so well was Carové, in his "Story without an End." The next of Longfellow's poems was the "Psalm of Life," dated July 26, 1838. Both these poems show the German influence that was potently working in the author's mind; but the "Psalm of Life" was still original in evading the sadness that tinges nearly all the German poetry of the kind then in vogue. It bursts away from poetic melancholy with an effort, and proclaims the gladness of living well to be the best of poetry. It is not the best of poetry, but it makes the best theme for a preacher; and the gladness of living well is a blessed and undeniable truth. This was the voice of hopeful, healthy young America, raised in protest through the man who had but a few years ago translated, for his own sad solace, that pæan of the grave, Salis's "Song of the Silent Land." Now his eye was brighter, and his spirit was renewed and full of energy. It is true that—

> "Our hearts, though stout and true,
> Still, like muffled drums, are beating
> Funeral marches to the grave."

That is true, and yet so is this :—

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints in the sands of time :

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again."

Here we have the cry of a man who is passing away from a crisis in his own life. His heart is in his words ; he wrote them for himself, from himself.[1] They are full of a vast hope, too, and few modern poets have given utterance to so comprehensive a faith. They are in the main intelligible to anybody, and applicable to the life of a cow-boy or to the life of a king. And they contain at least one image of the greatest originality and force. It has been said that Longfellow found his simile about "muffled drums" in a poem by Henry King, Bishop of Chichester. Longfellow denied that he had ever read the Bishop's lines, and he is to be believed. His image was his own conception, and it is as perfect in its solemn significance as any simile to be found throughout the poetry of the world. The other striking image of the poem, that of the footprints, is not nearly so admirable, for it does not bear thinking about. The "Psalm of Life," great poem or not, went straight to the hearts of the people, and found an echoing shout in their midst. From the American pulpits, right and left,

[1] The lines were composed at an open window in full view of the morning sun.

preachers talked to the people about it, and it came to be sung as a hymn in churches. How brave is the world after all! Its toiling multitudes gladly take for their own a song that promises no rest, but only cheers them on to be up and doing, *with a heart for any fate.*

The "Psalm" was first published—but anonymously—in *The Knickerbocker Magazine*, in the autumn of 1838. The astonishing degree to which it was copied and circulated everywhere at last caused Mr. Owen, a bookseller in Cambridge, to ask the writer whether he was not afraid that his claim to be the author might be challenged. Longfellow was perhaps little afraid of this; but at any rate he promised to republish the poem, together with a few other pieces, as his own; and this little collection appeared in 1839, with the title of "Voices of the Night." In addition to some translations and the "Early Poems" mentioned already in another chapter, "Voices of the Night" included the "Prelude," "Hymn to the Night," "A Psalm of Life," "The Reaper and the Flowers," "The Light of Stars," "Footsteps of Angels," "Flowers," "The Beleaguered City," and "Midnight Mass for the Dying Year." Most of these pieces had originally appeared in *The Knickerbocker Magazine.* The "Prelude" was new. Here there is just a hint of Keatsian melody, though Keats's rich and subtle harmonies are wanting.

"Beneath some patriarchal tree
I lay upon the ground;
His hoary arms uplifted he,
And all the broad leaves over me
Clapped their little hands in glee,
With one continuous sound;—

A slumberous sound,—a sound that brings
The feelings of a dream,—
As of innumerable wings;
As, when a bell no longer swings,
Faint the hollow murmur rings
O'er meadow, lake, and stream.

* * * *

The green trees whispered low and mild;
It was a sound of joy!
They were my playmates when a child,
And rocked me in their arms so wild!
Still they looked at me and smiled,
As if I were a boy;

And ever whispered, mild and low,
'Come, be a child once more!'
And waved their long arms to and fro,
And beckoned solemnly and slow;
Oh, I could not choose but go
Into the woodlands hoar;

* * * *

'Learn, that henceforth thy song shall be,
Not mountains capped with snow,
Nor forests sounding like the sea,
Nor rivers flowing ceaselessly,
Where the woodlands bend to see
The bending heavens below.

* * * *

'Look, then, into thine heart, and write!
Yes, into Life's deep stream!
All forms of sorrow and delight,
All solemn Voices of the Night,
That can soothe thee, or affright—
Be these henceforth thy theme.'"

This was a plain declaration of the mission to which

the poet thought himself called. "The Hymn to the Night" is remarkable, not only for the effective alternation of pentameter and trimeter lines, but for these memorable verses:

> "From the cool cisterns of the midnight air
> My spirit drinks repose;"

And

> "Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,
> And they complain no more."

"Footsteps of Angels" is probably the most successful domestic poem ever penned. Simple enough, each line; short enough it is, in all. Yet it hints at a day's labour ended, at the consequent emergence of the inner self, at the comforts of a very homely home, at thoughts of those long departed from share in our joys, at marriage, at sudden bereavement, at the lessons of comfort that even death brings. Each of these skilfully-touched themes has enough interest in it to make a poem, for all are subjects on which every human being has sacred and tender and hidden comments to make within his or her heart. By the exhibition of such intuitive sympathies was it that Longfellow at once leapt into popular affection. "The Beleaguered City" throughout its first portion reads just like a ballad of Uhland's. Its second portion evolves its moral too completely; with the first verse the mind gathers it all, and the subsequent verses consequently lose effect. It must be confessed that only a strong stomach for sentimentality can stand "The Reaper and the Flowers," for the metaphor is dangerously hazy. "L'Envoi" has no particular merit, and

the "Midnight Mass for the Dying Year" cannot be termed original, saving in its minor imaginative touches. Of these it has several that are truly excellent :

> "The hooded clouds, like friars,
> Tell their beads like drops of rain—"

The sense of a pun in the next line perhaps destroys its effect :

> "And patter their doleful prayers."

> "Howl ! howl ! and from the forest
> Sweep the red leaves away !
> Would the sins that thou abhorrest,
> O Soul ! could thus decay,
> And be swept away !"

CHAPTER VI.

WHILE these poems were being thrown off for *The Knickerbocker Magazine*, a more solid literary labour had been advancing. Throughout the winter of 1838–39 the various chapters of "Hyperion" had been growing under Longfellow's pen, and they served three functions; they were the means by which their author made a careful bid for the position of America's best writer of prose, but they also drew from his mind many of his sorrows, causing them to die in expression, and they hinted a great hope that lay in his heart without having anything to do directly with his intellectual aspirations.

"I have written a Romance during this past year. The *feelings* of the book are true; the *events* of the story mostly fictitious. The heroine, of course, bears a resemblance to the lady, without being an exact portrait. There is no betrayal of confidence, *no real scene* described. 'Hyperion' is the name of the book, not of the hero. It merely indicates that here is the life of one who in his feelings and purposes is a 'son of Heaven and Earth,' and who, though obscured by clouds, yet 'moves on high.' Further than this the name has nothing to do

with the book, and in fact is mentioned only once in the course of it. I expect to be mightily abused. People will say that I am the hero of my own romance, and compare myself to the sun, to Hyperion Apollo. This is not so. I wish only to embody certain feelings which are mine, not to magnify myself. I do not care for abuse, if it is real, manly, hearty abuse. All that I fear is the *laudatur et alget*, the damnation of faint praise; *that* I hope to avoid, this time."

So wrote Longfellow to his friend Greene. The book appeared two or three months before "Voices of the Night," but it really inaugurated so completely an epoch in his life, that it is fit to consider it at the beginning of a new chapter. The first thing to notice regarding the book is that, despite the author's assurances to Greene, there never was another work of the kind in which the matter was so plainly autobiographical. Paul Flemming, the hero, is Longfellow the widower, in thought, word, and deed. Mary Ashburton, the heroine, is Frances Appleton, and a faithful portrait of that lady, as every friend of subject and limner has testified. Here a candid critic must feel compelled to remark that the secret purpose of "Hyperion"—the wooing of Miss Appleton—was gone about thus publicly with some appearance of indelicacy. We have seen that Longfellow parted from Miss Appleton in Switzerland, without any word of formal courtship having passed between them. At Boston they had met subsequently; but still the poet had feared to "put it to the touch." In "Hyperion" he heaped up the treasures of his mind before this fair fellow-traveller; in a thousand suggestive ways he dealt with scenes and

incidents through which they had passed together (these scenes and incidents form the core of the book), and then brought the story to an end by displaying the endeavours of Paul Flemming to forget a woman whom he reverenced as a saint, and loved more than a saint, while she appeared to pass away from him free in her maiden meditations. Who among the friends with any knowledge of Longfellow's travels and fellow-travellers in Switzerland could fail to read between the lines? Had the experiment thus made with a singular boldness failed, "Hyperion" would have been the source of life-long embarrassment to two persons at least.

So much as this needs to be said about the main thread of interest in the book. Of course there is a great deal of colour distributed throughout it that comes entirely from Longfellow's imagination, and in particular the translations of German songs, the criticisms on Jean Paul Richter and other German authors in the Rhenish part of the travel-story were not only beautiful in themselves, but absolutely a new kind of literature to America. At once "Hyperion" set hundreds of readers a-dreaming of pleasant wanderings by the song-haunted German rivers, or in the "Valley of Fountains," where Mary's eyes used sometimes to dim with repressed tears, while Paul Flemming read to her. Every summer, "Hyperion" becomes a Bible to tourists of many nations. Its pictures of the old home of Gothic chivalry, its spiritual sentimentality—Jean Paul clarified and diluted—these made a new birth in America; Romance was in the air for the first time.

The prose of these chapters, as prose, is faulty. Its gush is fuller and sublimer than that of Lytton's "Pilgrims

of the Rhine," but with all its learning it is curiously young. The book's aim was to do in America for Central Europe what Washington Irving had done for England and for Italy. This it did and more, for its sympathies with lofty thinkers were deeper than Irving's could have been. But Irving's "Sketch Book" gave birth to a style; Longfellow's prose style has never been copied by any considerable writer. Its redundant imagery is, for one thing, as far from the achievement of poor writers as it is likely to be avoided by writers who are purists in style. But apart from this imagery, the book repels robust minds by constantly verging on mawkishness. Had Longfellow written only "Hyperion," we should have suspected him of being a man with a tendency to paw his friends; a man who lacked fist and grip.

"Hyperion" lends itself peculiarly to illustration by extracts; in this process the cloying effect of reading chapter after chapter is not felt. Here we have the sketch of Paul Flemming:—

"The setting of a great hope is like the setting of the sun. The brightness of our life is gone. Shadows of evening fall around us, and the world seems but a dim reflection,—itself a broader shadow. We look forward into the coming lonely night. The soul withdraws into itself. Then stars arise, and the night is holy.

"Paul Flemming had experienced this, though still young. The friend of his youth was dead. The bough had broken 'under the burden of the unripe fruit.' And when, after a season, he looked up again from the blindness of his sorrow, all things seemed unreal. Like the

man whose sight had been restored by miracle, he beheld men, as trees, walking. His household gods were broken. He had no home. His sympathies cried aloud from his desolate soul, and there came no answer from the busy, turbulent world around him. He did not willingly give way to grief. He struggled to be cheerful, —to be strong. But he could no longer look into the familiar faces of his friends. He could no longer live alone where he had lived with her. He went abroad, that the sea might be between him and the grave. Alas! between him and his sorrow there could be no sea but that of time."

Mr. Appleton is drawn as Mr. Berkley :—

"Mr. Berkley was an Englishman of fortune; a good-humoured, humane old bachelor; remarkable alike for his common sense and his eccentricity. That is to say, the basis of his character was good, sound common sense, trodden down and smoothed by education; but this level groundwork his strange and whimsical fancy used as a dancing-floor, whereon to exhibit her eccentric tricks. His ruling passion was cold-bathing; and he usually ate his breakfast sitting in a tub of cold water, and reading a newspaper. He kissed every child he met; and to every old man said, in passing, 'God bless you!' with such an expression of voice and countenance, that no one could doubt his sincerity. He reminded one of Roger Bontemps, or the Little Man in Gray, though with a difference."

Then comes the softly radiant heroine :—

"Presently a female figure, clothed in black, entered the room and sat down by the window. She rather listened to the conversation than joined in it; but the few words she said were spoken in a voice so musical and full of soul, that it moved the soul of Flemming, like a whisper from heaven.

"Oh, how wonderful is the human voice! It is indeed the organ of the soul! The intellect of man sits enthroned visibly upon his forehead and in his eye; and the heart of man is written upon his countenance. But the soul reveals itself in the voice only; as God revealed Himself to the prophet of old in the still, small voice, and in a voice from the burning bush. The soul of man is audible, not visible. A sound alone betrays the flowing of the eternal fountain, invisible to man!

"Flemming would fain have sat and listened for hours to the sound of that unknown voice. He felt sure, in his secret heart, that the being from whom it came was beautiful. His imagination filled up the faint outline which the eye beheld in the fading twilight, and the figure stood already in his mind like Raphael's beautiful Madonna in the Dresden Gallery. He was never more mistaken in his life. The voice belonged to a beautiful being, it is true; but her beauty was different from that of any Madonna which Raphael ever painted; as he would have seen, had he waited till the lamps were lighted. But in the midst of his reverie and saint-painting, the landlord came in, and told him he had found a chamber, which he begged him to go and look at.

* * * * * *

"Mary Ashburton was in her twentieth summer. Like

the fair maiden Amoret, she was sitting in the lap of womanhood. They did her wrong who said she was not beautiful; and yet

> 'She was not fair,
> Nor beautiful;—those words express her not.
> But, oh, her looks had something excellent,
> That wants a name!'

"Her face had a wonderful fascination in it. It was such a calm, quiet face, with the light of the rising soul shining so peacefully through it. At times it wore an expression of seriousness—of sorrow even: and then seemed to make the very air bright with what the Italian poets so beautifully call the *lampeggiar dell' angelico riso* —the lightning of the angelic smile.

"And, oh, those eyes—those deep unutterable eyes, with 'down-falling eyelids, full of dreams and slumber,' and within them a cold, living light, as in mountain lakes at evening, or in the river of Paradise, for ever gliding,

> 'With a brown, brown current,
> Under the shade perpetual, that never
> Ray of the sun lets in, nor of the moon.'

"I dislike an eye that twinkles like a star. Those only are beautiful, which, like the planets, have a steady lambent light—are luminous but not sparkling. Such eyes the Greek poets give to the Immortals.

"The lady's figure was striking. Every step, every attitude was graceful and yet lofty, as if inspired by the soul within. Angels in the old poetic philosophy have such forms; it was the soul itself imprinted on the air. And what a soul was hers! A temple dedicated to Heaven,

and, like the Pantheon at Rome, lighted only from above. And earthly passions in the form of gods were no longer there, but the sweet and thoughtful faces of Christ, and the Virgin Mary and the Saints. Thus there was not one discordant thing in her; but a perfect harmony of figure, and face, and soul—in a word, of the whole being. And he who had a soul to comprehend hers must of necessity love her, and having once loved her, could love no other woman for evermore.

"No wonder, then, that Flemming felt his heart drawn towards her, as, in her morning walk, she passed him, sitting alone under the great walnut-trees near the cloister, and thinking of heaven, but not of her. She, too, was alone. Her cheek was no longer pale; but glowing and bright, with the inspiration of the summer air. Flemming gazed after her till she disappeared, even as a vision of his dreams, he knew not whither. He was not yet in love, but very near it; for he thanked God that He had made such beautiful beings to walk the earth."

As specimens of the many happily-sententious paragraphs that are strewed through the book, we may quote the following, the first of which was probably meant for Emerson[x]:—

[x] Emerson and Longfellow always admired each other; but, I suspect, only half-heartedly, although with every outward sign of courteous regard. An entry in Longfellow's diary runs as follows:—

"March 8th, 1838. This evening Emerson lectured on the Affections; a good lecture. He mistakes his power somewhat, and at times speaks in oracles, darkly. He is vastly more of a poet than a philosopher. He has a brilliant mind, and develops and expands an idea very beautifully, and with abundant similitudes and

"There are many speculations in literature, philosophy, and religion, which, though pleasant to walk in, and lying under the shadow of great names, yet lead to no important result. They resemble rather those roads in the Western forests of my native land, which, though broad and pleasant at first, and lying beneath the shadow of great branches, finally dwindle to a squirrel track, and run up a tree!"

"Remember that the secret studies of an author are the sunken piers upon which is to rest the bridge of his fame, spanning the dark waters of Oblivion. They are out of sight; but without them no superstructure can stand secure!"

So much for "Hyperion"—a work of prose fiction that presents a curious contrast to Poe's minutely-constructed, Defoe-like story then a year old—"The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym." It also contrasts forcibly with Nathaniel Hawthorne's first series of "Twice-Told Tales." The "Twice-Told Tales" are, of course, as objective in their treatment as "Hyperion" is subjective: for Hawthorne always worked objectively. In learning and many-sidedness of human sympathy, Hawthorne was no match for Longfellow; to the glitter and the "sickness of verbal melody," that crept into the poet's prose, the more professed teller of tales opposed an imagination that expressed itself in simple sentences where every word was husbanded for its direct effect in organi-

illustrations. Jeremiah Mason said a sharp thing the other day, when asked whether he could understand Mr. Emerson. His answer was, 'No, *I* can't, but my daughters can.'"

cally developing the central idea of each romance. The pleasantries of Irving's prose, and the half-matured enthusiasm of Longfellow's, will fade away long before Hawthorne's beautifully-structured writings have suffered any decay. Dunce at Bowdoin College Hawthorne may have been, as Walter Scott was called dunce at the High School of Edinburgh; but judged, not as a motive power for good or evil in the common world—judged, purely as an art-creation, by the few who care only to regard works of literature as works of art—"The Scarlet Letter" must be held above all other achievements whatsoever in the history of American prose and poetry.

In this same year of 1839, we find still other work coming from Longfellow's active brain. On May 24th, his diary entry is as follows: "Told Felton of my plan of a heroic poem on the Discovery of America by the Northmen, in which the Round Tower at Newport and the Skeleton in Armour have a part to play. The more I think of it, the more I like it." This entry seems to indicate his contemplation of an epic; but a good ballad was what came of the idea. It is worth mention that this Round Tower at Newport is a curious building, called by many generations of settlers the Old Windmill (it certainly does not look like a windmill), but now declared by some archæologists to be the work of the early Danes!

Again we find in the diary:

"I have broken ground in a new field; namely, ballads; beginning with the 'Wreck of the Schooner *Hesperus*,' on the reef of Norman's Woe, in the great

storm of a fortnight ago. I shall send it to some newspaper. I think I shall write more. The *national ballad* is a virgin soil here in New England; and there are great materials. Besides, I have a great notion of working upon the *people's* feelings. I am going to have it printed on a sheet, with a coarse picture on it. I desire a new sensation and a new set of critics. Nat. Hawthorne is tickled with the idea. Felton laughs and says, 'I wouldn't.'"

This rough edition of the famous ballad was not put in hand. Norman's Woe is a forbidding mass of rock, standing out in the sea not far from Gloucester. On this rock, towards the close of the year—as Longfellow read in the newspapers—a schooner called the *Hesperus* went to pieces. Not long after the event, the poet conceived the notion of writing a ballad on the subject, and rising from the fireside, he began and completed the poem the same night. It was printed in *The New World*, January, 1840; and the author received twenty-five dollars for it.

There is one form of poetry with regard to which the popular taste is unerring, and that is the ballad. A man who writes a ballad writes it for a nation, and if his nation will not adopt it, it is not a good ballad, though it may still possess poetical merit. Many a so-called ballad is so loaded with poetic work, and evolves a theme so subtle, that it does not catch the rough imagination of the public; but a real ballad, written for the people, about deeds prompted by simple, strong motives, may be as bald as the author pleases;—provided it has the sap of human nature in it, it will succeed. Longfellow felt all

this thoroughly when he commenced making his ballads, and therefore he succeeded gloriously. Rossetti, in England here, and in our own day, was an example of a poet trying earnestly to attain the strength of the antique ballad, not only in the swing and occasional jolt of the metre, but in the hewing of flinty phrases that strike sparks. But, with all his genius, he missed the adequately simple and strong motives; and his beautiful "Stratton Water" will satisfy the lusty multitude as little as most of Longfellow's sonnets satisfy those whose ears are attuned to the earnest harmonies of the great sonnet-writers like Rossetti himself. The poet who is to make the people's ballads must forget to be subtle; he must come out of his study and stand with Sir Philip Sidney in the crowded street, and there compose those songs that sound like a trumpet. This reliance on universal sympathies was unerring in Longfellow. He adopted the ding-dong manner deliberately, and it achieved its purpose. It is scarcely necessary to remark that in addition to meeting the demand for strong motive and swift action, Longfellow's best ballads are adorned by felicities of descriptive and other imaginative diction that by themselves are poetry. Take this in "The Wreck of the *Hesperus*":

"Colder and louder blew the wind,
A gale from the north-east;
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm, and smote amain
The vessel in its strength;
She shuddered and paused, like a frighted steed,
Then leaped her cable's length."

What poet of the age could have described a ship in a storm better than this? Or has any writer of any age described the subject better?

Scarcely less perfect is the verse:

> "The breakers were right beneath her bows,
> She drifted a dreary wreck,
> And a whooping billow swept the crew
> Like icicles from her deck."

We are conscious of but one disturbing fault of art in this splendid ballad—the similes are too frequent; the word "like" becomes wearisome. Edgar Allan Poe was possibly right, also, in objecting to the freezing of salt tears in the girl's eyes.

"The Wreck of the *Hesperus*" was republished in 1841, along with some other poems of the same kind, collected under the title of "Ballads and Other Poems," and this volume contained "Excelsior." It is idle to point out faults in this poem: the world has adopted it, faults notwithstanding. If I may express my thoughts on the matter plainly, I must say that I grudge the piece its success, and wish it had never been written. The opinion has been advanced that the public are the best judges of a ballad; but "Excelsior" is not a ballad. A ballad deals with doings or sufferings of real men, women, or children—or supernatural beings worked by human passions—and about such doings and sufferings, if these are fit for a ballad, and appeal to elementary emotions, the common people are competent to judge. But in "Excelsior" we have for hero a cranky lad who is not flesh, fish, fowl, or spirit. Were he of human flesh, his

madcap notion of scaling a mountain with the purpose of getting to the sky would be simply drivelling lunacy, and if he did undertake his Alpine climb, it would be difficult for him to select any peak, on the slopes of which he would be likely to encounter so much good company. De Quincey somewhere relates that a young genius once climbed to the summit of Skiddaw, and there lay down with his face to the sky, and expired, by mere act of will. This was a demented boy who at least knew what he was about to do; but Longfellow's boy would be fairly brought to a standstill on the summit. It would be absurd to suppose him a spirit instead of flesh and blood, for no spirit would be so silly as climb a snowy mountain for nothing. This kind of criticism may seem puerile; but it is the fundamental conception of the figure in "Excelsior" that is really a puerility; and save in the second-last line of the poem, there is not throughout the piece a touch of Longfellow's higher imagination. To speak of the oft-condemned Latinity of "Excelsior" for "Excelsius" is superfluous; but few are aware that Longfellow's classical scholarship was so weak as to admit of his trying to justify what might have passed for a slip; and therefore this curious passage may be cited from a letter to Mr. H. T. Tuckerman: "You will perceive that 'Excelsior,' an adjective of the comparative degree, is used adverbially—a use justified by the best Latin writers." By and by, finding that this statement—probably taken upon hearsay from insufficient authority—could not be defended, the poet reverted to the more scholarly but far-fetched explanation, that an ellipsis might be supposed, the full phrase being "*Scopus meus Excelsior*

est." The history of the poem is the best explanation, however. The poet one night, after a party, took up a New York newspaper bearing the seal of the New York State—a shield, with a rising sun, and the motto "Excelsior." At once he conceived the idea of his poem, and adopting the motto with no regard for anything but its suggestiveness, jotted a draft of his lines on the back of a letter from Charles Sumner. Once the objectionable word had got into the public's mouth, the author did not consider it worth while to try and change it. And so, imperfect as it is, the poem has circulated round the world, and will probably so circulate in future ages, a hymn of aspiration, as "Footsteps of Angels" is a hymn of patience. There are not wanting men of critical culture who admire it. Oliver Wendell Holmes declares "Excelsior" to be Longfellow's greatest poem.

It would be wrong not to mention specially that "The Village Blacksmith," that glad full-voiced song of brawny arm and honest toil, first saw the light in "Ballads and Other Poems." The "village smithy" stood in Brattle Street, Cambridge. There came a time when the chestnut tree that shaded it was cut down, and then the children of the place put their pence together and had a chair made for the poet from its wood. The "Other Poems" included "Maidenhood," a study of life that developes subtle suggestions we might have looked for from Wordsworth rather than from Longfellow, although the mere phraseology is not like that of him who sang of the Maid of Dove. A clergyman in the States once preached a sermon from this poem, and told of a strange student of "Maidenhood."

This was a poor lone woman, dwelling in a hut that stood in a bare tract of the North-West. From an illustrated paper she had cut a picture of a young girl and pasted it on her wall. Longfellow's poem was printed below it. There day by day, as she stood at her bread-making or her washing, she gazed at the young face, pondering the words of the poet until both face and poem worked themselves into her nature. When the clergyman happened to call at her cabin, and noticed the humble attempt at decoration, the old woman was able to talk of "Maidenhood," and draw from it such meanings as astonished the visitor and sent him home with keener views into life's beauties. This story typifies the relation of Longfellow to humble readers all over the world, and such a relation is his chief glory.

CHAPTER VII.

ABOUT the time when "Ballads and Other Poems" appeared, the transcendental movement of the Practical Christians was stirring men's minds in America. The Brook Farm community was the result of this odd revival, and although Emerson and Alcott and Margaret Fuller did not join Brook Farm, they had been answerable for much of the spirit which prompted this experiment in Christian socialism. Longfellow, however, once more exhibited his thorough caution and sagacity by holding absolutely aloof from the movement, and while most men talked for or against the transcendentalists with curiosity and vigour, he was as little affected by transcendentalism as Keats was by the inchoate Kantianism which Coleridge introduced to England from Germany.

The Slave Question, likewise, arose about this period of the poet's life; and it is not improbable that, if left to his own judgment, the poet would have avoided utterance on this subject also. He was generous and upright, with the quickest sympathies for good; but his temperament was not heroic. He could never have gone to the platform with Lloyd Garrison and Channing to speak in the face of prejudiced multitudes because he must. The

voices of friends implored him to use his powerful pen and plead for human brotherhood as a poet should, and he took the matter into his thoughts. Meanwhile, he was ordered away to Europe to undergo a cure—for nothing more serious than nervous exhaustion—at the baths of Marienberg, and after a pleasant, healthful rest in Germany, he crossed the English Channel, to visit Dickens. The following letter tells its own story:

BROADSTAIRS, KENT, *September* 28, 1842.

"MY DEAR LONGFELLOW,—How stands it about your visit, do you say? Thus: your bed is waiting to be slept in; the door is gaping hospitably to receive you. I am ready to spring towards it with open arms at the first indication of a Longfellow knock or ring. And the door, the bed, I, and everybody else who is in the secret, have been expecting you for the last month.

"The states of mind that I have undergone—and all along of you—since I have been down here, a term of nine weeks! The imaginings I have had of the possibility of your knocking at my door in London without notice, and finding nobody there but an old woman; the misgivings that have come across me of your being, successively, in every foreign steamer that has passed these windows homeward bound, since the first of the month; the hideous train of fancies from which your letter has relieved me,—baffle description.

"The forged letter of which Felton speaks was published in the New York papers, with a statement that I had addressed it to the editor of the *London Morning Chronicle*, who had published it in his columns. In this

production I disparaged America very much, and girded at my own reception. You know what the American press is; and will be, I dare say, as little surprised at this outrage as I was. Still, it exasperated me—I am of rather a fierce turn at times—very much; and I walked about for a week or two with a vague desire to take somebody by the throat and shake him, — which was rather feverish.

"I have decided, perhaps you know, to publish my American Visit. By the time you come to me I hope I shall have finished writing it. I have spoken very honestly and fairly; and I know that those in America for whom I care will like me better for the book. A great many people will like me infinitely the worse, and make a devil of me straightway.

"Rogers is staying here, and begs me to commend him to you, and to say that he has made me pledge myself, on pain of non-forgiveness ever afterward, to carry you to see him without loss of time when you come.

"Faithfully your friend,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

From Dickens's London home of English hospitality, Tavistock House, the poet sent an account of himself to his friend Sumner—

"*October* 16, 1842.

"I write this from Dickens's study, the focus from which so many luminous things have radiated. The raven croaks from the garden, and the ceaseless roar of London fills my ears. Of course, I have no time for a letter, as I must run up in a few minutes to dress for

dinner. I can only tell you that I shall return in the *Great Western*. As soon as you get this, therefore, start for New York to meet me. If you cannot, send Hillard or Felton or Cleveland; or Howe,—for I think he must have more business with the Bible Society about this time! Somebody *must* come. The *Great Western* sails from Bristol on the 22nd. Dickens goes with me to Bath to dine with Landor. Mr. Rogers has just been here sitting a half-hour with me. He arrived in town last night. We breakfast with him on Tuesday and dine with him on Wednesday.

"I am so excited about starting for home that I can hardly hold this pen. I have had a most delightful visit here in London. But, alas, the town is quite empty, and I shall miss seeing persons whom I desire to look upon.

"I have so many, many things to say to you that I am dumb. And let it go at that. I will only add, that delighted as I am with London, my desire to be at home again overwhelms every other. I come back with tremendous momentum!

"I had read Dickens's book ['American Notes']. It is jovial and good-natured, and at times very severe. You will read it with delight and, for the most part, approbation. He has a grand chapter on Slavery. *Spitting* and *Politics at Washington* are the other topics of censure. Both you and I would censure them with equal severity, to say the least. He gives due laud to the New York oysters 'for thy dear sake, heartiest of Greek professors;' and says of Howe, 'There are not many persons, I hope and believe, who after reading these pages can ever hear that name with indifference.'

"Don't fail, one or two of you, to come to New York."

It was on the voyage homeward from England that Longfellow composed his carefully polished "Poems on Slavery," and these were published in 1842. Fine as they are, something more powerful had been expected by his friends. They lack the argumentative earnestness of Whittier's slave poems, and, compared with young Lowell's rapier-like wit, they were but as tin swords against the South. We still read with a sickening feeling of horror that description in "The Quadroon Girl" of the old man selling his own flesh and blood to wealthy Lust; but Abolitionist orators had been dinning this kind of incident into the people's ears right and left, and after their perfervid accounts, bristling with circumstances and names, the poem seemed almost a commonplace. The very fact, however, that Longfellow treated his subject with a touch of this artistic coolness, enabled him to omit from his "Poems of Slavery" the accidentals that will tend, in generations that have their own problems of social oppression to study, to obscure the merits of both Whittier's and Lowell's poetry.

So perhaps the most enduringly touching picture of slavery the literature of the time bequeaths to posterity will be found in the lines wherein the slave lies, overcome with fatigue, amid the ungathered rice, and dreams of happiness in youth, until his spirit is freed and the lifeless body lies—

> "A worn-out fetter, that the soul
> Had broken and thrown away!"

After the War, a number of literary men were one day discussing matters of their craft. "Who is the greatest poet of America?" said one of them. "Whittier," cried Horace Greeley; and the others all assented. So much had the Burns of New England quickened the already fevered pulse of the North at that time. Longfellow, on the whole, had lost an opportunity.

But now the poet found the real cure for his nerves. His mental malady had been love, and on landing again in America he sat down and wrote these words: "Of late my heart has quite turned my head out of doors." From the time that he had seen at Interlaken that fresh American girl of nineteen whom he afterwards described as Mary Ashburton, he had growingly felt again the truth that is put into lines of "Hiawatha," that are twice beautiful in being appropriately Indian in imagery—

> "As unto the bow the cord is,
> So unto the man is woman,
> Though she bends him, she obeys him,
> Though she draws him, yet she follows,
> Useless each without the other."

In fine, Longfellow felt that he must try and win Frances Elizabeth Appleton for his wife; and after a formal engagement, as short as their vague courtship had been long, he made her his wife in the July of 1843. It was not enough for this earthly-happy poet that he should have had in his youth a helpmate of noticeable beauty and sweetness of character; in his maturity fortune gave him a nobly-planned woman, whose qualities of mind and temper were far above those of most women, rising

towards the nature of her husband like flame to flame, while her beauty, if we may judge from written record and the testimony of existing portraits, was truly splendid, in its smooth calm face of a full oval, set with those "deep, unutterable eyes," of which Longfellow has sung. "Hyperion" had seriously offended Miss Appleton at first, and well it might have offended her; but the combined attractions of the frank, handsome poet prevailed with her at length, and he shared a perfect happiness with her to the end of her life. Mr. Nathan Appleton did not suffer his lovely daughter to pass from him undowered, and bought for the newly married pair the whole of Craigie House and estate, to be their home. It is not often that nature tries to spoil men of genius with material luxury; so let us enjoy the spectacle of this poet of thirty-six years in the bloom of hearty manhood, full of the lighter graces of learning, esteemed most by those who knew him best, blessed with a wife for whom to work was a pride, and honoured at every fireside in the land, for poems that were household words. These felicities he enjoyed—save one—to the day of his death, in a mansion surrounded with natural beauty, and replete with comforts, while after his second union all care about money fell away from him for ever. It seemed in that year 1843 as if the blessings he had spread among the homes of his people had returned upon his own abode with the fulness of peace and comfort.

In the year of his second marriage, Longfellow published a dramatic poem on which he had long been engaged—"The Spanish Student." The theme of this

play was taken from "La Gitanella," of Cervantes, and was brought into his mind by the *furore* Fanny Elssler was creating in America by her dancing—that Fanny Elssler whom Mrs. Grote endeavoured to tame into respectability. Preciosa, the Spanish Gipsy, is the daughter of a don, from whom she is stolen in infancy by the Romany folk. One of these people, Cruzado, educates her as a dancer, and destines her to marry another Gipsy, called Bartolomé. Preciosa, however, is not very old before she meets and loves Victorian, a student, who at the time of the play's opening is a student of Alcalá, and betrothed by his father to an heiress in Madrid. Victorian loves Preciosa madly, and one night after she has danced at the theatre, goes to her home to talk with her, but there finds the Count de Lara, a rascally noble, who has made his way in by shameful strategy. A duel takes place as the result of this discovery, and Victorian spares the Count his life when it is at his mercy. The Count now pretends frank friendship, tells Victorian of favours he has received from Preciosa, and produces a ring as a gift from the dancer. Victorian recognizes it, he thinks, as a keepsake he himself had given Preciosa, although in reality it is a duplicate of it. Shortly afterwards, Bartolomé kills the Count, when this worthy is again forcing the apartment of the dancer at night; and then Victorian, who has gone away on disconsolate wanderings, hears by letter that he was deceived by the Count, and that Preciosa has left the stage and is wandering again with the Gipsies. He searches for her, and, finding her, observes the ring still on her finger, as it ever had been. He would buy it, but nothing will

tempt her to part with it, and a court messenger then comes on the scene to announce the real parentage of Preciosa, and invite her to visit her father at Madrid. Towards Madrid she joyfully returns with her lover, and on the way Bartolomé jealously fires his gun at the girl, and is killed by a return shot from the student.

The plot is not in itself strong, and Longfellow's was not the genius to strengthen it in the working of it out. A story, of which the central figure is a beautiful Spanish stage-dancer, with all the rich disreputables at her feet, but giddily enamoured of a student, should abound in passion. But there was no passion in Longfellow's nature. He made the whole thing not an acting play at all, not a study of deep emotions, but a pretty drawing-room piece, with nice descriptions and a song or two. To run over the mere names of the *dramatis personæ* is to see how little grit the poet was able to put into this kind of writing:—Victorian, Hypolito, the Count of Lara, Don Carlos, the Archbishop of Toledo, a Cardinal, Beltran Cruzado, Bartolomé Roman, the Padre Cura of Guadarrama, Pedro Crespo, Pancho, Francisco, Chispa, Baltasar, Preciosa, Angelica, Martina, Dolores. The women are the weakest of all. Oh, for a good scowling name among all these! Any one who has read the slight summary of the story just given, will understand that the most delicate point to manage is the procuring of the counterfeit ring. How does Longfellow's dramatic ingenuity serve him here? We are to suppose the servant of the Count of Lara, Francisco, just entered to his master—

> "Well, Francisco,
> What speed with Preciosa?

Fran. None, my lord.
She sends your jewels back, and bids me tell you
She is not to be purchased by your gold.
Lara. Then I will try some other way to win her.
Pray, dost thou know Victorian?
Fran. Yes, my lord,
I saw him at the jeweller's to-day.
Lara. What was he doing there?
Fran. I saw him buy
A golden ring that had a ruby in it.
Lara. Was there another like it?
Fran. One so like it
I could not choose between them.
Lara. It is well.
To-morrow morning bring that ring to me.
Do not forget. Now light me to my bed."

How little ingenious is this cheap and obvious artifice! Yet it must be confessed that at the close of the play Bartolomé is got rid of in a rather skilful manner—

[*A pause. Then enter* BARTOLOMÉ *wildly, as if in pursuit, with a carbine in his hand.*]

Bart. They pass this way! I hear their horses' hoofs!
Yonder I see them! Come, sweet caramillo,
This serenade shall be the Gipsy's last!

[*Fires down the pass.*]

Ha! ha! Well whistled, my sweet caramillo!
Well whistled!—I have missed her!—O my God!

[*The shot is returned.* BARTOLOMÉ *falls.*]

Chispa is far the most natural character in the play. He is Victorian's servant, a laughing, lazy, good fellow, with a little of Touchstone about him. He is so perfect in contrast to the other figures of the play, in point of being

life-like, and Longfellow's bent lay so little in the humorous direction, that one suspects his prototype to exist in some Spanish play. Even if Lope or Calderon did not father him, he is certainly cousin to a far finer fellow—Sancho Panza. Preciosa is a modest little minx, but we have to take all her charms for granted. She says nothing remarkable. Victorian is too sententious for a lover. Is this the kind of thing he should climb up to a balcony at midnight for the purpose of whispering to a pretty girl?—

> "Our feelings and our thoughts
> Tend ever on, and rest not in the Present.
> As drops of rain fall into some dark well,
> And from below comes a scarce audible sound,
> So fall our thoughts into the dark Hereafter,
> And their mysterious echo reaches us."

This is not good love-making, although it is fine thought; and here we may point to the passage as one of many in which Longfellow tends to dwell on futurity, at points where Henry Vaughan and Wordsworth would have taken up their parable about the dim past. The contrast between America's poet and our English poets in this particular is best noted in "To a Child."

Reverting to "The Spanish Student," we may halt for a moment at a passage in which Victorian talks with a fellow-student—

> "*Hyp.* . . . Hast thou e'er reflected
> How much lies hidden in that one word, *now?*
> *Vict.* Yes, all the awful mystery of Life!
> I oft have thought, my dear Hypolito,

That could we, by some spell of magic, change
The world and its inhabitants to stone,
In the same attitudes they now are in,
What fearful glances downward might we cast
Into the hollow chasms of human life!
What groups should we behold about the death-bed,
Putting to shame the group of Niobe!
What joyful welcomes, and what sad farewells!
What stony tears in those congealèd eyes!
What visible joy or anguish in those cheeks!
What bridal pomps, and what funereal shows!
What foes, like gladiators, fierce and struggling!
What lovers with their marble lips together!"

This is a speech that comes within measurable distance of being very great. A magnificent idea occurs to the poet, and the method by which he thinks to work it out is striking; but the execution is faltering, and the result a disappointment. What a theme for Shakespeare! Shakespeare would not have been content with that poor phrase—"the group of Niobe"; nor would he have put stony tears in congealed eyes; nor have repeated ideas towards the close, although the final line of the passage is one he might have written with pride.

"The Spanish Student" contains a pretty lyrical nothing, beginning "Stars of the Summer Night." This has been perhaps the most popular of all serenades, among composers of music. There are some capital bits of description strewed through the "play;" but we must agree with Poe in declaring that "The Spanish Student" is not a play at all. In this instance, as in every case in which Longfellow attempted the construction of a plot in acts, he continually loses control of the dramatic action by lapsing into mere narrative.

The first work of importance undertaken by Longfellow after his marriage had been a commission from Messrs. Carey and Hart, the Philadelphia publishers, to arrange a book on "The Poets and Poetry of Europe." This work consists of about four hundred translations, by many hands,[1] from Anglo-Saxon, Icelandic, Danish, Swedish, German, Dutch, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. Some "critical introductions" were written for the collection by Longfellow, but the short biographical notice prefixed to the translations from each author, was invariably done by Professor Felton. Longfellow's eyesight had temporarily failed him, but the threatening trouble passed away after a few weeks, during which Mrs. Longfellow discharged the duties of amanuensis to her husband. "The Poets and Poetry of Europe" appeared in 1845. In November of the same year we find the diary entries as full as ever, and indicating almost daily activity in poetic composition.

"Nov. 12th. Began a poem on a clock, with the words, 'Forever, never' as the burden; suggested by the words of Bridaine, the old French missionary, who said of eternity, '*C'est une pendule dont le balancier dit et redit sans cesse ces deux mots seulement dans le silence des tombeaux —Toujours, jamais! Jamais, toujours! Et pendant ces effroyables révolutions, un réprouvé s'écrie, "Quelle heure est il?" et la voix d'un autre misérable lui répond, "L'Eternité."*' . . .

"28th. Set about 'Gabrielle,' my idyl in hexameters,

[1] The greater number were drawn from the works of Bowring, Herbert, Costello, Taylor, Jamison, Brooks, Adamson, Thorpe, and Longfellow himself.

in earnest. I do not mean to let a day go by without adding something to it, if it be but a single line. F. and Sumner are both doubtful of the measure. To me it seems the only one for such a poem."

In the first of these entries we have the beginning of "The Old Clock on the Stairs," a poem that describes a clock on the staircase of a house in Pittsfield that belonged to relatives of Mrs. Longfellow. "Gabrielle" was the name first selected for the idyl ultimately christened "Evangeline."

In this same year of 1845 was published "The Waif: A Collection of Poems" by various writers, edited by Longfellow, and prefaced by his lines now known as "The Day is Done." Poe, who was furiously jealous of Longfellow from first to last, accused the book of having a "moral taint; . . . there does appear in the little volume very careful avoidance of all American poets who may be supposed especially to interfere with the claims of Mr. Longfellow." Poe was not represented in the collection; and this was his new way of hinting an old charge, namely, that Longfellow stole ideas from him. The charge was never substantiated. Two years after "The Waif," another book of a similar sort, "The Estray," was compiled by our poet.

In 1846 Longfellow produced "The Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems," a volume which included "The Old Clock on the Stairs," as well as favourites like "The Arsenal at Springfield," "Drinking Song," and "The Arrow and the Song." The treatment of "The Arsenal at Springfield" was suggested by Charles Sumner's fine speech on "The True Grandeur of

Nations." The poem owes something, also, to Mrs. Longfellow, who walked round the arsenal with her husband when they were on their wedding tour, and startled him by remarking that the gun-barrels ranged upon the walls looked like an organ for death to play.

> " Ah ! what a sound will rise, how wild and dreary,
> When the death-angel touches those swift keys !
> What loud lament and dismal Miserere
> Will mingle with their awful symphonies ! "

We must not forget that this solemn strain was full of prophecy.

" The Arrow and the Song " is short, simple, perfect. Another poet, in developing its idea, might have drawn upon a larger vocabulary; but here nothing but the simplest words are necessary. I think that no poet could find in this little song anything at which to cavil. The mingling of lyric with epigram somewhat recalls the happiest efforts of Walter Savage Landor.

THE ARROW AND THE SONG.

I SHOT an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where ;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where,
For who has sight so keen and strong
That it can follow the flight of song ?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke ;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

These lines were composed while Longfellow was strolling through "Norton's Woods" at Cambridge.

"To a Child," the first of the poet's studies of infancy, contains oft-quoted words about Washington:—

> "Once, ah, once, within these walls,
> One whom memory oft recalls,
> The Father of his Country, dwelt.
> And yonder meadows, broad and damp,
> The fires of the besieging camp
> Encircled with a burning belt.
> Up and down those echoing stairs,
> Heavy with the weight of cares,
> Sounded his majestic tread;
> Yes, within this very room
> Sat he in those hours of gloom,
> Weary both in heart and head."

In "Rain in Summer" an eye that dilates less in excitement than Walt Whitman's, nevertheless looks upon nature, for once, after the manner of that earth-intoxicated rhapsodist. Yet the passage least like Whitman is the best—

> "These, and far more than these,
> The Poet sees!
> He can behold
> Aquarius old
> Walking the fenceless fields of air,
> And from each ample fold
> Of the clouds about him rolled
> Scattering everywhere
> The showery rain,
> As the farmer scatters his grain."

This is not Whitman, but Wordsworth.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT should it be called? "Gabrielle," or "Celestine," or "Evangeline"? The new tale that Longfellow had been putting into hexameters eventually appeared in 1847, with the title of "Evangeline; a Tale of Acadie."

In 1755 Nova Scotia—or Acadia—which for more than thirty years had been nominally a British province, was inhabited by some thousands of French colonists, who were exempt from military service under France, and were termed "French Neutrals." Their real sympathies lay with the land of their birth, not with the Government under whose half-contemptuous protection they lived. In Europe, commissioners had for some time been trying to settle a satisfactory boundary between New France and Nova Scotia, when matters were brought to a crisis by the French in America, who erected two forts on a neck of land at the head of the Bay of Fundy. Massachusetts—this was before the Revolution, be it remembered—sent out three thousand men to capture these forts, and the thing was done. In the garrisons were found three hundred of the Neutrals, and therefore the Acadians were held con-

demned as rebels against the English Crown. What was to be done with them? The Governor of Nova Scotia, the Chief Justice of the province, and two British Admirals, met in council in July, and resolved that the entire population must be cleared out of that part of the country, and this deportation was to be carried out in such a way as to disperse the captives among the English of the other provinces. Of course it was not easy to execute an edict like this upon a widely-scattered population; but stratagem prevailed with these simple people, who had lived peacefully for two hundred years in this land, feeding sheep and tilling the soil rudely. Governor Lawrence issued a proclamation ordering all the males of the colony, "both old and young men, as well as all the lads of ten years of age," to assemble at the church of Grand-Pré on a certain Friday, to learn His Majesty's pleasure, "on pain of forfeiting goods and chattels in default of real estate." On the Friday appointed, September 5, 1755, four hundred and eighteen unarmed men met within the church. The doors were closed upon them, and guarded by soldiers; and then this mandate was read to the snared farmers: "It is His Majesty's orders, and they are peremptory, that the whole French inhabitants of these districts be removed. Your lands and tenements, cattle of all kinds, and live stock of all sorts, are forfeited to the Crown, with all your other effects, saving your money and household goods; and you yourselves are to be removed from this province. I shall do everything in my power that your goods be secured to you, and that you are not molested in carrying them off; also, that

whole families shall go in the same vessel, and that this removal be made as easy as His Majesty's service will admit. And I hope that, in whatever part of the world you may fall, you may be faithful subjects, a peaceful and happy people. Meanwhile you are the king's prisoners, and will remain in security under the inspection and direction of the troops I have the honour to command."

Unbroken silence greeted this cruel edict, until after the lapse of a few minutes a moan broke from the stunned Acadians, and their cry of grief was echoed in bewilderment by the anxious women waiting with their children outside. On the 10th of September the inhabitants of Grand-Pré—nineteen hundred and twenty in number—were marched to the water's side at the point of the bayonet, and embarked in Government ships. In spite of some show of care on the part of the authorities, many parents were separated from their families and driven into different vessels, husbands and wives lost each other, and maidens parted from their lovers for ever. The vessels were not able to accommodate all the emigrants, so some of these remained till fresh transports carried them away from their homes in cheerless December, and then Acadia was left desolate, and the Acadians never gathered together again. Small knots of the wanderers settled, and have left descendants, at Clare, at Minudie, in parts of Prince Edward's Island, and on the north coast of New Brunswick. In these days, we English hear much of the Crofter question; but we never spoiled humble folk of land as we did in 1755, by the help of Massachusetts guns.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (how pleasant it always is to come upon these two great American men of letters together!) one day dined at Craigie House, and brought with him a clergyman. The clergyman happened to remark that he had been vainly endeavouring to interest Hawthorne in a subject that he himself thought would do admirably for a story. He then related the history of a young Acadian girl who had been turned away with her people in that dire "'55," thereafter became separated from her lover, wandered for many years in search of him, and finally found him in a hospital, dying. And Hawthorne saw nothing in this! That Longfellow at once took to the lovely legend is not so striking a fact as that Hawthorne, true to the strange taste of his "miasmatic conscience," felt the want of a sin to study in the story, and so would have none of it. "Let me have it for a poem, then," said Longfellow, and he obtained the leave at once. He raked up historical material from Haliburton's "Nova Scotia" and other books, and soon was steadily building up that idyl that is his true Golden Legend. After he had wormed his way through the chronicles of that doomed land, he wrote to Hawthorne and suggested that the romancer should take up as a theme the early history and later wanderings of these Acadians; but with Acadia Hawthorne would have nothing to do on any terms.

Beyond consulting records, Longfellow put together the materials of "Evangeline" entirely "out of his head;" that is to say, he did not think it necessary to visit Acadia and pick up local colour. When a boy, he had rambled about the old Wadsworth home at Hiram,

climbing often to a balcony on the roof, and thence looking over great stretches of wood and hill—pine-woods, and hills down which log-laden cataracts tumbled resoundingly. From recollections of such a scene, it was comparatively easy for him to imagine "the forest primeval;" and these same recollections of early days must have furnished many portraits of farming folk not unlike the Acadians, save that they were not so sunny and meek of temper, coming of stern Protestant stock, instead of from a light-hearted people whose very superstitions were all tinged with poetry.

The selection of hexameter lines for "Evangeline" was of course a bold experiment—one that was being tried almost in the same year by Arthur Clough, whose "Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich: a Long-Vacation Pastoral," is scholarly and brilliant in metre and phraseology. Although Clough's lines much more resemble classic models than do Longfellow's, they cannot pretend to their sustained charm; we do not read the "Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich" for its music; and here Bowdoin completely out-distanced Oxford. The great precedent Longfellow had in his mind when he resolved to try hexameters was Goethe's "Hermann and Dorothea;" and this was enough to justify his attempt to compromise between the exactions of classic scansion and the rhythmical licence of English metres. His success was as wonderful as the attempt was bold. By employing a style of metre that carries the ear back to times in the world's history when grand simplicities were sung, the poet naturally was able to enhance the epic qualities of his work, and remove Acadia and its people to the neces-

sary extent from touch with a part of the world in which human history's developments were raw and unattractive. And once persuaded that it was possible to avoid "sing-song" monotony in English hexameters, Longfellow was right in thinking that the rhythm he chose was well suited for the telling of a long story into which nothing abruptly dramatic was to enter, but which was to derive its chief interest from broadly-worked pictures. Probably no other poem gave Longfellow so much trouble in writing. He has said almost as much: "'Evangeline' is so easy for you to read, because it was so hard for me to write." The necessity for varying the place of the cæsura, and the dearth of spondees in our language, were the two chief metrical difficulties with which he had to contend. Occasionally the reader unacquainted with conventionalities of classic prosody will find that where he is inclined at first to read a dactyl, the accent must rest on the first syllable, which with the next makes a spondee. This hint will be found specially serviceable regarding the initial feet of lines like the following, which must be read as commencing with the accent not on the third syllable, but on the first—

"On the morrow to meet in the church, when his Majesty's mandate," &c.

"Bring these ships to our shores. Perhaps the harvest in England," &c.

"And anon with his wooden shoes beat time to the music," &c.

The following line has been pointed out as a very perfect hexameter—

"Chanting the Hundredth Psalm—that grand old Puritan anthem."

And this is probably the worst line—a hopeless one—

"Children's children sat on his knee, and' heard' his' great' watch' tick'."

In this instance the onomatopoetic sympathy with which Longfellow describes the children listening to the regular ticking of a watch has made him forget the rules of metre absolutely.

Much nonsense has been talked about the general principle of English hexameters, by critics whose ears are attuned to the quantitative music of Greek and Latin verse. It is true that where, as in Charles Kingsley's "Andromeda," the poet clearly raises comparison with classic forerunners by reason of his subject and his method of treating that subject, it must be unpleasant for the ears of some scholars to have the looser English rhythms imposed upon them instead of the ancient spondees and dactyls arranged in a manner almost contrapuntal. On the other hand, when Longfellow chooses a subject wholly removed from classic association, why should he not experiment in any measure he pleases, and select, if it suits him, a system of lines in each of which there will be a sufficient number of words to fall by a more or less natural rhythm into six beats, or pulses? Call such lines English hexameters, or call them anything else: they can be written to read musically, —and what more is required? That there are six English feet in each of these lines is as indisputable as that there are five in each line of Pope's "Rape of the Lock." The term "English hexameters," therefore, seems applicable enough; and in using it, a poet need not be thought to

imply that he is seeking to translate the hexameters of the Iliad or the Æneid. Mr. Matthew Arnold has somewhere hinted that it *might* be possible, in translating Homer into English, to carry literary artifice so far as to put together English hexameters capable of scansion by long and short syllables. This idea has even been carried out, but only in brief experiments: it could not be sustained through any lengthy translation that aimed at either literal accuracy or poetic spirit. Longfellow himself cherished through life the project of translating Homer; but in such an undertaking English hexameters, had he chosen them as his vehicle, would have been as false in taste as they were justifiable in the construction of "Evangeline." Yet even in the case of a hexametrical rendering of Homer, the classical scholar only could be offended. To the unlearned reader, the measure of "Evangeline" would probably be as acceptable as the rhymed pentameter of Pope or the blank verse of Cowper. Of course we do not say that any translation in hexameters would prove acceptable; for Herschel's was a failure. The truth is that this measure, within its proper use, should be regarded, not as a bastard classicism, but as a wholly modern invention. Impassioned speech more often breaks into pentameter and hexameter than into any other measure; this is of course a truism. Longfellow himself has pointed to the splendid hexameters that abound in our Bible—"Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them;" "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet;" "He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection." Would Mr. Swinburne, simply because these

cadences might be called English hexameters, deny their lofty beauty? This form of verse will never, in all probability, become a favourite vehicle for poets' thoughts; but by a singular *tour de force* Longfellow succeeded in getting rid of the popular prejudice against it; and whatever the classicists may say, he put more varied melody into his lines than Clough, Hawtrey, Kingsley, Howells, or Bayard Taylor, attained in similar experiments.

What passages are we to select, when the whole poem is so carefully compacted of beautiful thoughts?

"This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,
Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,
Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic,
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.
Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neighbouring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest.

This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts that beneath it
Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the voice of the huntsman?
Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of Acadian farmers,—
Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the woodlands,
Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image of heaven?
Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers for ever departed,
Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty blasts of October
Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle them far over the ocean.
Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful village of Grand-Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and endures, and is patient,
Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of woman's devotion,
List to the mournful tradition still sung by the pines of the forest;
List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of the happy."

What metrical effort in English ever before gave us this sense of dignified serenity, of peaceful sonorousness like that of a priest's voice, when he raises his hands over a congregation to bless it?

"Somewhat apart from the village, and nearer the Basin of Minas,
Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest farmer of Grand-Pré,
Dwelt on his goodly acres; and with him, directing his household,
Gentle Evangeline lived, his child, and the pride of the village.
Stalworth and stately in form was the man of seventy winters;
Hearty and hale was he, an oak that is covered with snow-flakes;
White as the snow were his locks, and his cheeks as brown as the oak-leaves.
Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seventeen summers.
Black were her eyes as the berry that grows on the thorn by the wayside,
Black, yet how softly they gleamed beneath the brown shade of her tresses!
Sweet was her breath as the breath of kine that feed in the meadows.
When in the harvest heat she bore to the reapers at noontide
Flagons of home-brewed ale, ah! fair in sooth was the maiden.
Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn, while the bell from its turret
Sprinkled with holy sounds the air, as the priest with his hyssop
Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters blessings upon them,
Down the long street she passed with her chaplet of beads and her missal,
Wearing her Norman cap, and her kirtle of blue, and the ear-rings,
Brought in the olden times from France, and since, as an heirloom,
Handed down from mother to child, through long generations.

But a celestial brightness—a more ethereal beauty—
Shone on her face and encircled her form, when, after confession,
Homeward serenely she walked with God's benediction upon her.
When she had passed, it seemed like the ceasing of exquisite music."

There is a line—that last—than which Spenser never wrote a tenderer or Tennyson a more perfectly worded. In Spence's "Anecdotes," we learn that Pope once read a canto of Spenser to an old lady, who said he had been showing her a gallery of pictures. That is just what "Evangeline" is—a gallery of pictures; the landscapes softly laid out in a mellow radiance that constantly suggests Cuyp, and his interiors comparable with those of no painter, for painters of interiors have never yet approached the combined fulness of such a scene as this, without losing repose. It is the poet's privilege to secure both detail and general restfulness of effect.

"In-doors, warm by the wide-mouthed fireplace, idly the farmer
Sat in his elbow chair, and watched how the flames and the smoke-wreaths
Struggled together like foes in a burning city. Behind him,
Nodding and mocking along the wall, with gestures fantastic,
Darted his own huge shadow, and vanished away into darkness.
Faces, clumsily carved in oak, on the back of his arm-chair
Laughed in the flickering light, and the pewter plates on the dresser
Caught and reflected the flame, as shields of armies the sunshine.
Fragments of song the old man sang, and carols of Christmas,
Such as at home, in the olden time, his fathers before him
Sang in their Norman orchards and bright Burgundian vineyards.
Close at her father's side was the gentle Evangeline seated,
Spinning flax for the loom, that stood in the corner behind her.

Silent awhile were its treadles, at rest was its diligent shuttle,
While the monotonous drone of the wheel, like the drone of a bagpipe,
Followed the old man's song, and united the fragments together.
As in a church, when the chant of the choir at intervals ceases,
Footfalls are heard in the aisles, or words of the priest at the altar,
So, in each pause of the song, with measured motion the clock clicked."

But we must add four lines, for the sake of the fourth line, the subtle charm of which is worth long pondering:

"Thus, as they sat, there were footsteps heard, and, suddenly lifted,
Sounded the wooden latch, and the door swung back on its hinges.
Benedict knew by the hob-nailed shoes it was Basil the blacksmith,
And by her beating heart Evangeline knew who was with him."

No wonder Lowell believes that Theocritus would hardly have wished a word changed in writing like this!

The lovers are betrothed formally before the notary; and on the evening of the plighting, Evangeline had strange "dreamings" as she gazed out of her window into the dark, until by and by

"She saw serenely the moon pass
Forth from the folds of a cloud, and one star follow her footsteps,
As out of Abraham's tent young Ishmael wandered with Hagar!"

The church-going of the Acadians on a Sunday is lovingly described, and the edict of the king is given forth, while the people sob in the sacred building with their pastor. With the embarkation of the emigrants the First Part of the poem comes to an end.

The Second Part deals with the wanderings of the lovers, who once actually pass each other in the dark on

the Mississippi. At last, all but her hope in God withered, the once fresh-cheeked Evangeline becomes a Sister of Mercy in Philadelphia, and there she devotes herself, during a plague, to the care of the stricken in an almshouse. This almshouse, by the way, Longfellow sketched from Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia. Ah! one day, in this refuge of the dying,

" Suddenly, as if arrested by fear or a feeling of wonder,
Still she stood, with her colourless lips apart, while a shudder
Ran through her frame, and, forgotten, the flowerets dropped from her fingers,
And from her eyes and cheeks the light and bloom of the morning.
Then there escaped from her lips a cry of such terrible anguish,
That the dying heard it, and started up from their pillows.
On the pallet before her was stretched the form of an old man.
Long, and thin, and grey were the locks that shaded his temples;
But, as he lay in the morning light, his face for a moment
Seemed to assume once more the forms of its earlier manhood;
So are wont to be changed the faces of those who are dying.
Hot and red on his lips still burned the flush of the fever,
As if life, like the Hebrew, with blood had besprinkled its portals,
That the Angel of Death might see the sign, and pass over.
Motionless, senseless, dying, he lay, and his spirit exhausted
Seemed to be sinking down through infinite depths in the darkness,
Darkness of slumber and death, for ever sinking and sinking.
Then through those realms of shade, in multiplied reverberations,
Heard he that cry of pain, and through the hush that succeeded
Whispered a gentle voice, in accents tender and saint-like,
'Gabriel! O my beloved!' and died away into silence.
Then he beheld, in a dream, once more the home of his childhood;
Green Acadian meadows, with sylvan rivers among them,
Village, and mountain, and woodlands; and, walking under their shadow,
As in the days of her youth, Evangeline rose in his vision.
Tears came into his eyes; and as slowly he lifted his eyelids,

Vanished the vision away, but Evangeline knelt by his bedside.
Vainly he strove to whisper her name, for the accents unuttered
Died on his lips, and their motion revealed what his tongue would have spoken.
Vainly he strove to rise; and Evangeline, kneeling beside him,
Kissed his dying lips, and laid his head on her bosom.
Sweet was the light of his eyes; but it suddenly sank into darkness,
As when a lamp is blown out by a gust of wind at a casement.

All was ended now, the hope, and the fear, and the sorrow,
All the aching of heart, the restless, unsatisfied longing,
All the dull, deep pain, and constant anguish of patience!
And, as she pressed once more the lifeless head to her bosom,
Meekly she bowed her own, and murmured, 'Father, I thank thee!'

Still stands the forest primeval; but far away from its shadow,
Side by side, in their nameless graves, the lovers are sleeping.
Under the humble walls of the little Catholic churchyard,
In the heart of the city, they lie, unknown and unnoticed.
Daily the tides of life go ebbing and flowing beside them,
Thousands of throbbing hearts, where theirs are at rest and for ever,
Thousands of aching brains, where theirs are no longer busy,
Thousands of toiling hands, where theirs have ceased from their labours,
Thousands of weary feet, where theirs have completed their journey!

Still stands the forest primeval; but under the shade of its branches
Dwells another race, with other customs and language.
Only along the shore of the mournful and misty Atlantic
Linger a few Acadian peasants, whose fathers from exile
Wandered back to their native land to die in its bosom.
In the fisherman's cot the wheel and the loom are still busy;

Maidens still wear their Norman caps and their kirtles of home-spun,
And by the evening fire repeat Evangeline's story,
While from its rocky caverns the deep-voiced neighbouring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest."

Mark the beautiful transition from one picture to another that begins with "Then he beheld."

So ends "Evangeline"—a poem which should confer on Longfellow the title of "Golden-mouthed," that was given once to Bishop Jeremy Taylor. Hawthorne never tired of it, and had it read to him shortly before he died. Thus he came to admire the theme after all. The success of the poem was so immediate and prodigious that thirty-seven thousand copies were sold in ten years. The French Canadians reverence Longfellow for "Evangeline" beyond all their national poets. Every family among them has it by heart in Le May's translation, and scores of them have learned English expressly to enjoy the tale more fully in the original.

CHAPTER IX.

TO Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Longfellow and his family went to spend the summer of 1848. Their abode in Pittsfield was an old mansion named Melville House, near Oliver Wendell Holmes's house, and here Longfellow quietly sketched out and completed "Kavanagh," a story that was published in 1849. It fell rather flat, and has never been talked of in America with any enthusiasm. As the Americans found less to move them in the poet's studies of slavery than we find, so it seems to be the case that the pictures he draws in "Kavanagh" of every-day life in the rural parts of Massachusetts as it was about half a century ago, appeal to us here with more freshness and beauty than they do to those who are more or less familiar with the scenes and incidents he described. Of plot "Kavanagh" can hardly boast; it consists of a series of impressions drawn from the humdrum life of country folk, among whom the only learned and only completely discontented person is a village schoolmaster, Mr. Churchill. Mr. Churchill felt that he had been created to be a poet, and the smallness of his means and leisure and opportunity for the study of life chafed him daily. This was a nature of some

complexity, then, set in an environment the very simplicity of which at once afforded a contrast to it, and sharpened, or should have sharpened, its longing for stimulus. The schoolmaster was exactly the kind of subject Hawthorne might have dropped upon; and in Hawthorne's hands his life would have become thoroughly dramatic with quiet intensity. Probably we should be right in thinking that Hawthorne's methods in fiction had a good deal of influence in making Longfellow conceive "Kavanagh." But another influence seems to be still more evident, and that is Jean Paul Richter's. Again and again the short story told by the American poet reminds us of the German author who drew the poor student, Quintus Fixlein; and oftener still the schoolmaster exhibits the moods of Siebenkaes, while his poor little commonplace wife recalls to our minds the pig-headed Lenette, who had a good heart, but not the least capacity for understanding her eccentric spouse. Look at this brief scene :—

"'Good-night, Alfred!'

"His father looked fondly after him as he went upstairs holding Lucy by one hand, and with the other rubbing the sleep out of his eyes.

"'Ah! these children, these children!' said Mr. Churchill, as he sat down at the tea-table; 'we ought to love them very much now, for we shall not have them long with us!'

"'Good heavens!' exclaimed his wife, 'what do you mean? Does anything ail them? Are they going to die?'

"'I hope not. But they are going to grow up, and be no longer children.'

"'O, you foolish man! You gave me such a fright!"

"'And yet it seems impossible that they should ever grow to be men, and drag the heavy artillery along the dusty roads of life.'

"'And I hope they never will. That is the last thing I want either of them to do.'

"'O, I do not mean literally, only figuratively. By the way, speaking of growing up and growing old, I saw Mr. Pendexter this evening, as I came home.'

"'And what had he to say?'

"'He told me he should preach his farewell sermon to-morrow.'

"'Poor old man! I really pity him.'

"'So do I. But it must be confessed he is a dull preacher; and I dare say it is as dull work for him as for his hearers.'

"'Why are they going to send him away?'

"'O, there are a great many reasons. He does not give time and attention enough to his sermons and to his parish. He is always at work on his farm; always wants his salary raised; and insists upon his right to pasture his horse in the parish fields.'

"'Hark!' cried his wife, lifting up her face in a listening attitude.

"'What is the matter?'

"'I thought I heard the baby!'

"There was a short silence. Then Mr. Churchill said—

"'It was only the cat in the cellar.'"

True, Lenette never had a baby while married to Siebenkaes, but this does not so greatly matter to our argument. Here is a Massachusetts Siebenkaes grinding away at his small domestic mill, with the thought eternally rankling in his breast that the world does not understand or recompense him as he deserves, that even his wife is a goose, after all, and never will understand him, and that, if he only had six months in a year to himself, he could make himself a great man in literature, and satisfy himself with fame and probably with riches too. So he dreams and talks about a forthcoming book—it is to be a romance, and his wife claps her hands when he alludes to it, thinking that his little trumpet will shatter the walls of time itself; and at the end of the history he is still dreaming—nothing done, nothing likely to be done, his momentary inspirations setting a-going nothing but fretful conscience. The lesson of "Kavanagh" is "stay the good angel until he bless thee;" a great lesson, the value of which is imparted to us without much direct moralizing.

The book likewise contains the excellently life-like figure of Mr. Pendexter, a dutiful old clergyman, without a touch of suavity about him. Mr. Churchill inclines just a little towards him, because the world they live in has rejected him too; he is not popular, and in fact has to take himself off in his dusty pony chaise, making room for a strapping young minister, Kavanagh. The two pretty gentilities of the neighbourhood, Alice Archer and Cecilia Vaughan, of course are equally in love with the young man; and the way in which some of their love secrets are mixed up and betrayed by the

erratic flight of a messenger-pigeon, on one occasion, is exquisitely contrived. Miss Vaughan has a comic lover, too, the leading tradesman of the village, really the most humorous character that Longfellow depicted. And a certain old maid, Miss Manchester—for a village would not be a village worth describing unless it had an old maid to look after everybody in it—is equally well hit off. Every figure in "Kavanagh" is extremely well sketched. The materials of a masterpiece of fiction are all here; but it almost seems as if Longfellow was drawing a real village and real folk, and feared to disturb them while he watched them. Sometimes, on a spring forenoon, when the mists have scarcely risen from the meadows, and the poultry have not settled down to their siesta, you may enter an English hamlet, at one end passing the schoolhouse in which the children drone like bees: you find the draper at his shop-door, with his hands under his coat-tails, watching a smartly dressed young miss who is buying eggs up the street, and may or may not come to procure tape and needles from him: the clergyman's trap crunches the gravel among the trees of the vicarage at the other end of the village, and you see his blue spectacles approach the gate by and by, for he is off to negotiate an exchange for next Sunday with a brother clergyman miles away; you meet three or four dogs; you come upon a prim old lady cleaning her windows from the outside—and then you have taken in all there is to see till evening sets the children and the field-labourers loose in the streets, and the schoolmaster walks out with the draper, and blushes for pleasure when he gets the chance of raising his hat to the smartly-dressed young

lady who comes out again from the "big house," fluttering her bonnet-strings in the evening breeze. Then all sounds die quickly away, and the little life of the village is rounded with a sleep. After a day or two about the place you grow to recognize every human face and almost every fowl, so much does the leisurely calm intensify your seeing and hearing faculties; and you find the morning and the noon and the evening make the street of red-roofed cottages into delightful little tableaux. The tranquil zest which the visitor thus finds in village existence is the feeling that Longfellow had in his mind when he wrote "Kavanagh," and although as a story it would hardly stir the pulse of a school-girl, it is to be preferred to "Hyperion" ten times over, in point of literary taste.

In the year following that in which "Kavanagh" appeared, the poet atoned to the public for the partial failure of the prose idyl, by producing a new book of poems, "The Seaside and the Fireside." Its best items were the picturesque "Fire of Driftwood," "Resignation" (already mentioned), and the joy of all Americans, "The Building of the Ship." This last poem is indeed a noble piece of work, boldly handled, passing from scene to scene, and from phase to phase of reflection, in a most impassioned style. As a poem for recitation, this is probably as effective as anything Longfellow wrote. Yet in reading "The Building of the Ship," we are constantly reminded that there is no real border-line between prose and poetry. Not only does the unfettered play of rhythms in the poem cause the ear to forget the distinction at times, but the general style of thought belongs almost more to oratory than to the methods of

fastidious poesy. The ending of the piece has raised thousands of American audiences to frenzies of patriotic enthusiasm, and the enthusiasm does credit both to Longfellow and to the audiences; yet is not this mere oratory fitted out in rhyme?

> "Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!
> Sail on, O UNION, strong and great!
> Humanity, with all its fears,
> With all the hopes of future years,
> Is hanging breathless on thy fate!
> We know what Master laid thy keel,
> What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,
> Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,
> What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
> In what a forge and what a heat
> Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!
> Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
> 'Tis of the wave and not the rock;
> 'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
> And not a rent made by the gale!
> In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
> In spite of false lights on the shore,
> Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!
> Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,
> Our hearts, our hopës, our prayers, our tears,
> Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
> Are all with thee,—are all with thee!"

Mere oratory! Yes, it is; but finer than the finest of Webster's or Sumner's. Criticising "The Building of the Ship" as a poem, we must not forget that its form is obviously borrowed from Schiller's "Lay of the Bell."

Again a year, and then "The Golden Legend" was published (1851). Its time is the thirteenth century; its

scenes are laid in many lands; its hero is a mawkish Prince Henry of Vautsberg on the Rhine; its heroine is a young peasant girl called Elsie. Prince Henry, bewailing his fate in having to endure a strange disease that puzzles all physicians, is tempted by Lucifer, who comes to him in the disguise of a travelling doctor. The devil's blandishments succeed, of course, and Prince Henry, after swallowing the strange doctor's "Catholicon," is found out by the Church, excommunicated, and sent on a long course of expiatory wanderings. These wanderings take him to a cottage in the Odenwald, where he is hospitably entertained by the occupants, and the eldest daughter of the house learns that the young noble cannot find cure and peace,

> "Unless
> Some maiden, of her own accord,
> Offers her life for that of her lord,
> And is willing to die in his stead."

She resolves to sacrifice herself, and eventually sets out for the South of Italy with Prince Henry. This is rather a singular proceeding, and on the journey the pair have decidedly dangerous talks in the moonlight, on hotel balconies and places of the kind. However, it appears that the only place fit for the young maid's sacrifice is Salerno; so to Salerno they must go, and when they arrive there, Lucifer takes the form of a priest, and urges the immolation of Elsie. Almost at the last moment the Prince saves the girl: then he marries her, finds himself cured, and starts homewards with his bride in thoroughly good spirits. Elsie's is a character beautifully

thought out, and as an exemplification of the purer and more mystical elements of human love, is really original. The hypochondriac craze of Prince Henry is just such an affliction as these gloomy times produced in the cases of minds diseased by religion or by the possession of excessive power, or by both; but the Prince is quite a detestable young gentleman, with whom no reader could have sympathy. He certainly was not worth so much of Elsie's blood as a needle's prick could draw. Lucifer is the mildest-mannered devil that ever showed a hoof. The various scenes scarcely pretend to hang together by any natural sequence, and as a play, "The Golden Legend" is devoid of any dramatic interest save the religious devotion of the heroine. But the poem has another side. Longfellow designed it as a vehicle for illustrations of us people and customs of the Middle Ages; the mediævalism is certainly kept up at every point, and its note is sounded with prodigious effect in the very first scene, where we have a storm around Strasburg Cathedral spire, from which Lucifer and his devils try to tear the cross in fight with a band of angels, while to the clangorous bells is given Latin speech, and the choir within the church ends all with its vigil-chant—

> "Nocte surgentes
> Vigilemus omnes!"

It is strange, by the by, that Longfellow makes his bells talk Latin in the singular person—

> "Defunctos ploro!
> Pestem fugo!" etc.

A miracle play and a friar's sermon are introduced, and many of the places visited by the pilgrims are described with fulness and force. Scraps of Latin hymns are introduced throughout, but they are not remarkable; and they serve to suggest the question how it is Longfellow died without giving the world a real hymn in English, designed for use in worship.

This "Golden Legend" was framed from the theme of "Der Arme Heinrich," a metrical tale by the minnesinger Hartmann von der Aue. The draft of it was written in a month, and it took six months to correct and cut this down. It will interest some to know that the monk's sermon is in part adapted from a fulminating discourse by Fra Gabriella Barletta, an Italian of the fifteenth century. The Miracle Play is based upon the Apocryphal Gospels of James and the Infancy of Christ.

Turning to the poet's private life, we have to note that shortly after he had returned home from Pittsfield, with "Kavanagh" finished, he had the sorrow of losing his little daughter Fanny, who died in September, 1848. In August of 1849 his father passed away, in his seventy-fourth year—full of honour as of years. Within two years the poet's mother died also, quite suddenly.

CHAPTER X.

THERE was a time in the earlier part of Longfellow's career when Margaret Fuller criticised him frankly in "The Dial,"—told him that he was not going the right way about making himself a national poet, and called his poems exotic flowers, with no smell of American soil about them. Longfellow did not take these sayings kindly, but he profited by them nevertheless. Probably but for Margaret Fuller we should never have had "Evangeline," or "Kavanagh," or "Hiawatha." The construction of "Evangeline" was a courageous effort, but the experiment of "Hiawatha" was actually daring. The red-skinned natives of the States—these bloody barbarian Indians whom Mr. Edward Johnson and his coadjutors tried to clear out of the land—left among their descendants a body of rude traditions tinged with poetry. Longfellow raised for himself the question whether these traditions, or any one tradition among them, would furnish sufficient material for a monumental poem, in which should be preserved some record of the nobler qualities of the savage aborigines. Inquiry proved that although a considerable mass of tales had been collected from the original inhabitants of New England, these tales

were garnished by little fancy of a high kind. The red man, in truth, had never been the rhapsodical, sentimental being that ignorance had imagined him; and beyond a few stock metaphors about mountains and thunders, sunsets, buffaloes, waterfalls, hatchets, tobacco-pipes, and council-fires, his sense of beauty in thought or nature was not betrayed by traditions of any sort. Nevertheless, the more Longfellow pored over this new subject, the more he felt that he had an opportunity for doing an original thing in literature. It is said that the first suggestion for "Hiawatha" was derived from some Indian tales recited to him by a Harvard pupil. There may be noted also in Longfellow's diary several references to an Ojibway chief called Kah-ge-ga-gah'-bowh, an educated and loquacious Redskin, whom he had to tea of an evening, and whom he possibly questioned a good deal about the legends of his people. But most of the poet's preliminary notes were made from Schoolcraft's "Algic Researches," and "Indian Tribes of the United States." There he hit upon a rude hero named Manabozho; and by this name he first thought of calling his Indian Edda. Some of the incidents of Indian life preserved in the "Algic Researches" reminded the well-read poet of Finnish legends, and turning to the great epic of Finland—the "Kalevala"—he at once found a solution of the problem, how to adapt his language and metres to subjects so primitive as these Indian myths. The "Kalevala" is composed, like all the older Finnish poems, in unrhymed trochaic dimeter, with two forms of elaboration to satisfy the ear in place of rhyme—alliteration similar to that of Icelandic and Anglo-Saxon sagas—and what has come to

be called "parallelism," that is, reduplication of a line, or part of a line, in slightly varied form. These characteristics, and especially the peculiarity of parallelism, may be found fully developed in the Finnish collection of ballads called the "Kanteletar;" and in this collection, moreover, we find the prevailing note to be just the tender melancholy that makes the faint diapason of "Hiawatha." Selecting a specimen from the older "Kalevala" (this specimen is from a translation, without attempt at alliteration, by William Howitt), we can see how much Longfellow was indebted to the Finns for the structure of "Hiawatha's" verse—

"And there lives not such a hero,
Not a man so firm of purpose,
Not a man, much less a woman,
By his tears who is unmoved.
Weep the young and weep the aged;
Weep the middle-aged not less so;
Weep the men who are unmarried,
Weep the married men as fully;
Weep the bachelors and maidens;
Weeps the girl, half-child, half-woman,
When is heard that moving sound.
So his tears drop in the waters,
Tears of ancient Wäinämöinen;
To the blue sea they flow onward,
Onward from the wild strand flowing;
Deep beneath the crystal waters
Spreading o'er the sandy bottom,
Here they wondrously are changèd—
Changèd into precious jewels,
To adorn fair, queenly bosoms,
And to gladden loftiest minds."

This is part of a passage relating to songs sung by the demigod Wäinämöinen in praise of the ancestral hero Kalevar. Of course the lines suffer by translation, not only in music, but probably to some extent in sense. We can see enough in them, however, to show that they inspired Longfellow with the idea that this limpid, brook-like, eddying metre was just the thing to adapt to wild Indian tales of forest, and snows, and wigwam. He adopted, then, the unrhymed trochaics and the feature of parallelism.

When "Hiawatha" appeared (1855), some were eager to find the model of the verse-construction in the unrhymed trochaic dimeter of the old Romance ballads—a metre often used later by Calderon and Lope de Vega. D. F. McCarthy had introduced this metre into English in 1845, in a translation of Calderon's Dramas, and Dr. Kenealy (he was not "Dr." then) about the same time made use of it in "Goethe: a New Pantomime." But all such examples of metre are beside the mark. They certainly did not in any adequate way reproduce the old form of the Spanish ballads, which displayed *assonance* in place of the northern *alliteration.* And although an equivalent of the form used by Calderon, the metre used by Kenealy and McCarthy lacked the distinguishing feature of Finnish poetry—that mark of which Longfellow made such excellent use, the mark, namely, of parallelism. The real forerunner of Longfellow was that mighty assimilator of ideas, Goethe. In Goethe's short poem called "Finnisches Lied," we find the old Finnish metre and the old Finnish parallelism, just as we find it in Longfellow; and, like Long-

fellow, the German poet disregarded alliteration in this, his only experiment in the reproduction of Finnish literary modes.

The variety of metrical effects to be found in Longfellow's poetry is not more remarkable than the sense of fitness that he well-nigh invariably displayed, when he abandoned common forms. Here, in "Hiawatha," he has to tell us of the doings of an agile people, who live in the forests as alert as squirrels, and talk rapidly with a small vocabulary and scant stock of ideas. To get hold of a metrical form as new to the general public as his theme —a form moreover that is at once mobile and simple, like the Redskin's—is the winning of half his battle. He is now able to produce for us fresh effects comparable with the results produced by a Chopin or a Schumann, when the musician symphonizes from the limited tonic scale of a primitive race.

Picking out from the "Algic Researches" as many scenes and incidents as he required, Longfellow resolved to sing them in the new-found metre, not in a completely epical way, but as a series of hymns, descriptive of broken passages in the life of a semi-mythical Indian brave. The scene is laid among the Ojibways, on the southern shore of Lake Superior, in the tract lying between the Pictured Rocks and the Grand Sable. Hiawatha, known among other tribes as Michabou, Chiabo, Manabozho, or Tarenyawagon, is a creation of miraculous birth, sent among the Red people to clear their rivers, forests, and fishing-grounds, and to teach them peaceful arts.

In the Introduction we hear of Nawadaha, the sweet singer, who told the poet the tales that are to follow, having found them

"In the birds'-nests of the forest,
In the lodges of the beaver,
In the hoof-prints of the bison,
In the eyrie of the eagle!"

And in preparing to re-tell the stories of Nawadaha, the poet, on this occasion only, ventures from the depth of the Indian forest to address pale faces like ourselves, in words that, although introduced in a rather inartistic manner, are yet in themselves fine :—

"Ye who love the haunts of Nature,
Love the sunshine of the meadow,
Love the shadow of the forest,
Love the wind among the branches,
And the rain-shower and the snow-storm,
And the rushing of great rivers
Through their palisades of pine-trees,
And the thunder in the mountains,
Whose innumerable echoes
Flap like eagles in their eyries;—
Listen to these wild traditions,
To this Song of Hiawatha!
Ye who love a nation's legends,
Love the ballads of a people,
That like voices from afar off
Call to us to pause and listen,
Speak in tones so plain and childlike,
Scarcely can the ear distinguish
Whether they are sung or spoken;—
Listen to this Indian legend,
To this Song of Hiawatha!
Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,
Who have faith in God and Nature,
Who believe, that in all ages
Every human heart is human,
That in even savage bosoms

There are longings, yearnings, strivings
For the good they comprehend not,
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness,
And are lifted up and strengthened :—
Listen to this simple story,
To this Song of Hiawatha !
Ye, who sometimes, in your rambles
Through the green lanes of the country,
Where the tangled barberry-bushes
Hang their tufts of crimson berries
Over stone walls grey with mosses,
Pause by some neglected graveyard
For a while to muse, and ponder
On a half-effaced inscription,
Written with little skill of song-craft,
Homely phrases, but each letter
Full of hope and yet of heart-break,
Full of all the tender pathos
Of the Here and the Hereafter ;—
Stay and read this rude inscription !
Read this Song of Hiawatha ! "

Then are we told the short cycle of Hiawatha's missionary adventures. We learn about his annunciation in "The Peace-Pipe;" of his mysterious birth by Nokomis in "Hiawatha's Childhood;" then of his Fasting, of his Friends, of his Sailing, of his Fishing, of his Wooing, and other phases of his princely life among the sons of men, till the boaster Iagoo prophesies that a great canoe is coming to them over the waters, bearing men with faces painted white.

"'Kaw!' they said, 'what lies you tell us !
Do not think that we believe them !'
Only Hiawatha laughed not,

But he gravely spake and answered
To their jeering and their jesting:
'True is all Iagoo tells us;
I have seen it in a vision,
Seen the great canoe with pinions,
Seen the people with white faces,
Seen the coming of this bearded
People of the wooden vessel
From the regions of the morning,
From the shining land of Wabun.

'Gitche Manito, the Mighty,
The Great Spirit, the Creator,
Sends them hither on his errand,
Sends them to us with his message.
Wheresoe'er they move, before them
Swarms the stinging-fly, the Ahmo,
Swarms the bee, the honey-maker;
Wheresoe'er they tread, beneath them
Springs a flower unknown among us,
Springs the White Man's Foot in blossom.

'Let us welcome, then, the strangers,
Hail them as our friends and brothers,
And the heart's right hand of friendship
Give them when they come to see us.
Gitche Manito, the Mighty,
Said this to me in my vision.

'I beheld, too, in that vision
All the secrets of the future,
Of the distant days that shall be.
I beheld the westward marches
Of the unknown, crowded nations.
All the land was full of people,
Restless, struggling, toiling, striving,
Speaking many tongues, yet feeling
But one heart-beat in their bosoms.
In the woodlands rang their axes,
Smoked their towns in all the valleys.
Over all the lakes and rivers
Rushed their great canoes of thunder.

'Then a darker, drearier vision
Passed before me, vague and cloudlike.
I beheld our nations scattered,
All forgetful of my counsels,
Weakened, warring with each other;
Saw the remnants of our people
Sweeping westward, wild and woeful,
Like the cloud-rack of a tempest,
Like the withered leaves of Autumn!'"

And in the final flight of song, Hiawatha welcomes the Black Robe chief of the Pale-faces, with the cross on his bosom; and then, bidding his adopted nation farewell, he sets forth on a last lone journey "to the portals of the sunset," and thus fades out of the world. The two passages that have been quoted are chosen rather to tell the story than to exemplify the best workmanship in "Hiawatha." The charms of the work are many. The music is deftly managed; now at the end of a line we find an extra syllable that carries us, as it were, over a little rapid in the rushing metre, and at the end of another may come a slight pause, "a click," as one critic has said, "like the sound of an organ stop." The great point about the metrical effect is that the ear does not tire of the short-breathed lines; and it may be said, with little fear of contradiction, that no poet but Longfellow could have come out of the difficult experiment thus triumphantly; his sometimes over-melodious ear saved him in this instance, and made water-music from beginning to end of the poem. The poet has adorned the naked legends of Schoolcraft with all sorts of enrichments; but these are in keeping; if not historical, they are not anachronistic; and the imagery and scenery

are purely Indian. Hiawatha's character, albeit designed to show the refinement of manly vigour by temperance of mind, touches the sublime; it is highly improbable that the poor Red Indian will ever again receive an apotheosis so beautiful as this at the hands of any poet. The son of Nokomis has two friends who are likewise drawn skilfully, one, the nimble-footed Pau-Puk-Keewis, with a few firm touches, and the other, the gentle singer, Chibiabos, as if the artist had lingered over him to limn him very tenderly with a pencil of silver. In Chibiabos America grew to recognize their poet himself; and when Longfellow was carried to the grave, his requiem was chanted in his own words:

> "He is dead, the sweet musician!
> He has gone from us for ever!
> He has moved a little nearer
> To the Master of all music,
> To the Master of all singing!
> O, my brother, Chibiabos!"

Minnehaha ("Laughing Waters"), the young wife of Hiawatha, is a figure scarcely so much described as hinted at; her character is not to be analyzed, it is subtle as the perfume of woodland flowers; and like a perfume her life exhales, and Hiawatha passes through the sorrows of a widower. But the strange thing is that the joys and sorrows of these faun-like Redskins do not move us as we read; even at funeral obsequies it is only of their exquisite pose that we think; and what we relish most is the dancing and gambling of Pau-Puk-Keewis, the fishing for the mighty sturgeon, the talks with the

wise beaver, the story-telling at the wedding, the fight of Mudjekeewis with the Great Bear, and the woodland smell all-pervading. This was a poem that did smell of American soil; it was national; and Longfellow could say with David, "The Lord hath put a new song into my mouth."

"Hiawatha" made an immediate success that proved it to be the most popular literary triumph of the century. Fully a hundred thousand copies of the poem were sold in two years; scholars and simple, old and young, found it new and good.

Memory carries the writer back to days when Longfellow's "Hiawatha" was eight years old, and in a class of four ill-spelling Scottish boys, there was a prodigy of childish learning. Although but seven years of age, he could repeat from beginning to end both Scott's "Lady of the Lake" and Longfellow's "Hiawatha," and many an afternoon did he keep his fellows spellbound with this song of the American forests. On these occasions they gathered under an old piano in a disused room, and the solemn-faced little oracle—now he is in the cavalry!—chanted forth Longfellow's trochaics unswervingly, while the audience remained suspended between curiosity to find him halt and awe at dimly-understood utterances that seemed like fairy tales out of the Bible. When they arrived at the passage where Kabibonokka, the North Wind, "to the lodge came wailing," one little lad put down the pedal of the ruined old square piano, while another would strike his head, like a drumstick, against its belly, and make it shudder and loudly sigh. This was Kabibonokka, the North Wind. Could the poet

have seen that oft-gathered group of children, not one of whom—no, not the reciter himself—really understood a line of the poem that entranced them, how he would have enjoyed the picture!

This slight reminiscence may serve in its way to exemplify the wonderful power that "Hiawatha" everywhere exerts over the young, as well as over so many grown-up readers. The secret of this spell is no doubt the fact that the poem narrates the doings of a childlike people in a land that is to us full of strange things. It is not probable that within our time any other poet will attempt to become the laureate of this wonderful land, where the author of "Wyoming" adventured but poorly, the singer of "Madoc" lost his way unattended, and only the native-born genius found out the local secrets.

It is hard to believe that "Hiawatha" will not live in the admiration of posterity as long as any poem of this age. In its time it has been often abused, and parodied as often. Abuse and parody have now ceased; and when the Redskins themselves have died from off the face of the American continent, there will always be men and women ready to follow the poet into the primeval forests, see him make for himself a woodland flute, piping to the poor painted braves and making them dance, weeping with the weeping squaws, attuning his laughter to the soft babble of their streams, and giving himself, like them, such a companionship with birds and beasts and fishes, prairie, mountains, and trees, as is not likely to find similar utterance in any future century on this globe of ever-increasing populousness. It is true that in "Hiawatha's" pleasant numbers the Red Indian, with his narrow

skull and small brain, is not presented to us with less embellishment than he gains in Cooper's romances; but the fact does not diminish Longfellow's credit as a poet. After this Indian Edda had passed through the first burst of fierce criticism, Mr. Schoolcraft brought out a book called "The Myth of Hiawatha, and other Oral Legends of the North American Indians;" and the student who consults this compilation will be astonished at the wholly unimaginative character of the material thus diligently accumulated by a competent scholar. Yet it was from this material that Longfellow produced his masterpiece.

During the years through which we have been watching the creation of "The Golden Legend," "Evangeline," and "Hiawatha," Longfellow had frequently contributed to a number of American magazines, giving them the first taste of pieces afterwards brought together in book form. In 1857, *The Atlantic Monthly* was started in Boston, by Messrs. Phillips, Sampson, and Co., publishers, and James Russell Lowell was commissioned to edit it on liberal principles, with a view to making it a magazine of all the talents—native talents. *The Atlantic* was started at a dinner, and it became the custom for editor and contributors to meet at a similar symposium on the last Saturday of each month, just as the early writers for *The London Magazine* used to meet at the invitation of Taylor and Hessey. Lowell, therefore, gathered around him, every four weeks, Agassiz, J. Eliot Cabot, John S. Dwight, Felton, Emerson, Holmes, E. R. Howe, Estes Howe, Charles E. Norton, Francis H. Underwood, Edmund Quincy, and — king among

them—Henry Longfellow. The singer of "Hiawatha" was always good company at these gatherings—full of matter, wise, genial; Emerson let off some of his best philosophic crackers among them; Lowell supplied the prime motive power of enthusiasm, and his sarcasms excellently sharpened the more delicate wit of the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table. The dinners usually were held at "Parker's;" but once the party went to "Porter's," in Cambridge, and there indulged in canvas-back ducks and "mongrel goose," with a good deal of egg-flip afterwards—all these creature comforts being specialities at "Porter's." This was a famous Nox Ambrosiana: they sat late, and marched home through snow, chanting a chorus then popular under the name of "Puttyrum." It must have been Lowell who started "Puttyrum," and we need not find fault with him for allowing the voices of these high-minded men of letters to be wafted to us for once in tones of exceeding hilarity.

For years Longfellow sent his best detached poems to *The Atlantic*, beginning in 1857 with "Santa Filomena," and, between that year and 1876, writing for the periodical over forty of his best poems.

In 1858, "The Courtship of Miles Standish" followed up "Evangeline," as a further experiment in hexameters. Its design was to picture the deeds and sufferings of the primitive Plymouth Colony, and the sombre nature of the subject is relieved by the maidenly graces of "Priscilla." Miles Standish is a busy man, and, moreover, sheepish with women, so he commissions John Alden to go and woo Priscilla to become Mrs. Standish. Poor John Alden is loath to do the job, for he himself loves the girl;

but he blurts out the message as bravely as any man could do—aye, in spite of a snubbing.

" Still John Alden went on, unheeding the words of Priscilla,
Urging the suit of his friend, explaining, persuading, expanding;
Spoke of his courage and skill, and of all his battles in Flanders,
How with the people of God he had chosen to suffer affliction,
How, in return for his zeal, they had made him Captain of Plymouth;
He was a gentleman born, could trace his pedigree plainly
Back to Hugh Standish of Duxbury Hall, in Lancashire, England,
Who was the son of Ralph, and the grandson of Thurston de Standish;
Heir unto vast estates, of which he was basely defrauded,
Still bore the family arms, and had for his crest a cock argent
Combed and wattled gules, and all the rest of the blazon.
He was a man of honour, of noble and generous nature;
Though he was rough, he was kindly; she knew how during the winter
He had attended the sick, with a hand as gentle as woman's;
Somewhat hasty and hot, he could not deny it, and headstrong,
Stern as a soldier might be, but hearty, and placable always,
Not to be laughed at and scorned, because he was little of stature;
For he was great of heart, magnanimous, courtly, courageous,
Any woman in Plymouth, nay, any woman in England,
Might be happy and proud to be called the wife of Miles Standish!
But as he warmed and glowed, in his simple and eloquent language,
Quite forgetful of self, and full of the praise of his rival,
Archly the maiden smiled, and, with eyes overrunning with laughter,
Said, in a tremulous voice, 'Why don't you speak for yourself, John?'"

Priscilla knew all the while the true state of matters in John Alden's heart, and she reciprocated its warm feel-

ings. So, in the end, Miles had to stand aside, and Priscilla wedded the more lovable of two uncommonly bashful warriors.

For beauty of description or breadth of motive, "The Courtship of Miles Standish" does not bear comparison with "Evangeline," but it gives us glimpses of some historic New England characters, and creditably renders into some sort of poetry the dutiful, rigid, frigid kind of lives that the men who founded the State of Massachusetts led, in the fear of the Lord.

CHAPTER XI.

LONGFELLOW was now on the pinnacle of prosperity. His books sold in such quantities as to guarantee him a large yearly income. Thus he had felt warranted, in 1854, after about eighteen years of academic work as a teacher, in resigning his Harvard Professorship, to be free for purely literary pursuits. He was indubitably the handsomest, wealthiest, kindliest, best-mannered author in America; and he was also the most popular author. He and his beautiful wife and his five children filled the Craigie House, for the greater part of every year, with the sunshine of a hospitable and well-ordered family. All was managed in this home in the frankest manner of America; its latch-string was ever out, for the dwelling, like the dwellings of the Acadians, was "open as day and the hearts of the owners." Nevertheless, the poet was never disturbed in it; when he chose to mingle with his family and his friends, they welcomed him; but, in the sanctuary of his royally-furnished library, he found an anchorite's quiet when he wished. Perhaps he felt the curiosity of the public intrusive to a galling degree at times; still he encouraged it, and for hours of a morning he would

receive calls from the inquisitive, or sit at his table writing scores of autographs for far-away strangers. Such patience might spring in part from fondness for even undiscriminating admiration; but it arose still more from unfailing benignity of nature. Why should people wish to see him, or have his autograph, except to add a pleasure to their lives? The pleasure was granted in every case that was at all reasonable. "Yesterday" (so runs the poet's diary for January 9, 1857), "I wrote, sealed, and directed, seventy autographs." Thus many of his working hours were filched away. But "here," he records one day, "is a letter I shall not answer. The writer, entirely unknown, says: 'Now I want you to write me a few lines for a young lady's album, to be written as an Acrostic to read *My Dearest One.* If you will please imagine yourself a young man loving a beautiful young lady, who has promised to be his wife, and then write as you would for yourself, you will much oblige one who has been an ardent admirer of your poems.'" The postscript to this request was "Send bill." And all sorts of rubbish like this were daily sifted by the unmurmuring recipient.

Felton, the jocund scholar, Sumner, the man of action, and the impulsive, helpful Charles Ward were still Longfellow's close intimates; and to these he had added the great Swiss leader in science, Agassiz, who would resign his beloved laboratory and museum at any call from Longfellow, to spend an hour, or a whole evening, in the Craigie House library, discussing "Hiawatha" or "Miles Standish" as eagerly and acutely as if he had not been born in Tell's country, nor had spent youth and man-

hood in absorbing studies that seldom are associated with poetical tastes.

In the summers, Longfellow and his family quartered themselves in a big wooden house at Nahant, a verdurous seaside village, north-east of Boston. There he wrote that poem on "Seaweed," full of lines that are as sea waves, and that other poem of sea and sand, "The Bells of Lynn":

> "And down the darkening coast run the tumultuous surges,
> And clap their hands, and shout to you, O Bells of Lynn!
>
> Till from the shuddering sea, with your wild incantations,
> Ye summon up the spectral moon, O Bells of Lynn!
>
> And startled at the sight, like the weird woman of Endor,
> Ye cry aloud, and then are still, O Bells of Lynn!"

Here, while the poet found rest for his brain and body, his eldest son Charles learned to be a sailor, and his second son developed from a sketcher into a professional artist; and here, also, Richard Dana wooed his daughter Edith. To the end of his life, his spirit, when weary, always haunted Nahant.

We see that the wine of life was tremblingly full in the cup of our poet, in and before his fifty-fourth year—that fatal year 1861—when his wife was burnt to death before his eyes. To amuse her younger children, Mrs. Longfellow had been making seals: a lighted drop of wax fell into her lap, and her skirts of gauze at once enveloped her in flames. Hearing his wife scream, the poet rushed from his study in time to snatch a rug and throw it round her ere she fell, mortally injured. She was buried on

July 12th; and she never looked fairer than on that day —the anniversary of her marriage. Terribly as the fire had burnt her, it had spared one side of her beautiful head.

In the days when Miles Standish first strode about New England, the graves of the English dead were hid from the Indians by being covered with waving corn. The grave that held his beloved in his heart, Longfellow hid from his friends. Hardly once was he heard to allude to his wife, after the first shock was over. His diary remained for long after that terrible day a complete blank; it was noticed that from that same day he aged rapidly: his heart was full of its secret—full, but silent, as a grave always is; and above this grave the strong man sowed his thoughts, and they ripened like the corn in autumn.

The next published work of the poet was "Tales of a Wayside Inn" (1863). In stringing together these Tales, the author lays hold of Chaucer's device of collecting a few contrasting figures to act as story-tellers. We have a jolly Landlord, who is also a squire and a justice of the peace; a Student, learned in chivalry; a Spanish Jew from Alicante, altogether a figure of majestic sombreness; a sunny-minded Theologian; a Norse Musician; a Sicilian; and a Poet. These worthies meet at the "wayside inn," of course, and the Tales are generated in the course of their talks.

The scene and the characters thus used to introduce the Tales, were all drawn from reality. In the town of Sudbury, twenty miles from Cambridge, was an old inn, called "The Red Horse Tavern"—a large, irregular, low-

roofed hostelry, surrounded by fine trees. Here lived, as landlord and squire of the parish, with a coat of arms, a gentleman of good descent called Howe. To Howe's bar-parlour Longfellow brought, in imagination, T. W. Parsons, the translator of "Dante"; Luigi Monti, a Sicilian; Professor Treadwell, of Harvard Theological Faculty; the scholar, Henry Ware Wales; the violinist, Ole Bull; and a notable Jew, called Israel Edulei. These became the Poet, Sicilian, Theologian, Student, Musician, Spanish Jew. And the Landlord, who tells the first and best tale, is old Howe himself. It is very pleasant to know from Longfellow that we are warranted in supposing these men to have been the original types he selected. We recognize the ever-glad countenance of Ole Bull in this character-sketch:

> "Fair-haired, blue-eyed, his aspect blithe,
> His figure tall and straight and lithe,
> And every feature of his face
> Revealing his Norwegian race:
> A radiance, streaming from within,
> Around his eyes and forehead beamed.
> The Angel with the violin,
> Painted by Raphael, he seemed."

And this seems an admirably-executed portrait of Monti, a man whom Longfellow had at his house frequently:

> "His face was like a summer night,
> All flooded with a dusky light;
> His hands were small; his teeth shone white
> As sea-shells when he smiled or spoke;
> His sinews supple and strong as oak;
> Clean shaven was he as a priest,

Who at the mass on Sunday sings,
Save that upon his upper lip
His beard, a good palm's length at least,
Level and pointed at the tip,
Shot sidewise, like a swallow's wings."

The "Prelude," whence these excerpts are taken, is the best piece of work in the whole book; probably because, in writing it, Longfellow felt most keenly apprehensive of comparison with Chaucer's pen-portraits. The Landlord's Tale, which follows the "Prelude," is "Paul Revere's Ride"—that oft-recited poem about a midnight gallop in the Revolution days. It of course suggests points of similarity with "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent;" but whereas, in Browning's poem, the interest centres in the gallant efforts of an overtaxed steed, Longfellow rivets attention by description of the sights through which his rider sweeps. The ride was historic; and it is probable that the poem will remain history for centuries also, for it is as good as the work of the English poet. It is a pity, however, that its fine onomatopoetic lines:

"Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides,"

are unmistakably reminiscent of Tennyson's:

"Low on the sand, and loud on the stone,
The last wheel echoes away."

Yet only the first of the two lines we quote from Long-

fellow is thus deprived of credit for originality; and the other is probably not to be surpassed in modern literature for the imitative music with which the rough gallop of an excited horse is rendered.

Of the other Tales in this volume, the long "Saga of King Olaf," composed of as many as twenty-two legends, is specially remarkable, although its interest scarcely belongs to the highest heroism, and is frittered away somewhat by a superabundance of episode. "Torquemada" is the one Tale that we could wish omitted: it is altogether painful.

It seems necessary to abandon the strict sequence of events in the poet's life here, so far as to note that "Three Books of Song" (1872) contained a second series of these "Tales of a Wayside Inn;" and in the following year still more were published in the volume entitled, "Aftermath." The frame-work of the Tales has never popularized itself; and the stories themselves have not gained the full measure of acceptance that might have been expected for them.

CHAPTER XII.

TO see one's friends aging is sadder than to feel old. In 1864 Nathaniel Hawthorne, "grey and grand," fell out of the ranks of America's great men. Longfellow's monody on Hawthorne's death appeared in the volume called "Flower-de-Luce and Other Poems" (1867). Felton was gone, too. One day Agassiz sat down in Longfellow's study and wept like a child, because he had lost his power to work: then he rallied for a space, and died in harness. A few chilly entries in the diary show how much the poet felt his increased loneliness; he was sitting out the fire. But, meanwhile, he did not slacken in his literary efforts; on the contrary, he busied himself overmuch.

In 1868 his publishers brought out "The New England Tragedies." The first of these tragedies, "John Endicott," deals with the persecution of the Quakers, and the other, "Giles Corey of the Salem Farms," was a study of the witchcraft mania. Both poems, written in blank verse, the intentionally plain style of which occasionally becomes comically bald, contain passages of gloomy power, but they fail in dramatic verve, and have no chance of

living. In truth, the subjects of these Tragedies were too irredeemably gloomy for poetic treatment; and Longfellow did not try to recast the grim stories; this work is just a metrical version of the old colonial chronicles. Years afterwards Longfellow composed a dramatic study of the Gospels, and called it "The Divine Tragedy" (1872); and then he arranged "The Divine Tragedy," "The Golden Legend," and "The New England Tragedies," as a trilogy called "Christus"; but "The Golden Legend" is the only section of the trilogy that can be called a success in any sense. The idea of the trilogy was, of course, the representation of Christianity in three forms—in its origin, in its mediæval power, and in its Western development through Puritanism. The transition to this last stage is too abrupt; and it does not give us a sense of the blessed fulness of the Gospel that the conclusion to a history of the Divine idea should convey. It had once been Longfellow's intention to make the third part consist of a poem founded on the Moravian settlement at Bethlehem; and this would certainly have furnished a fitter sequel to the other tragedies. "The Divine Tragedy" is as rigid in method as possible, and into the mouth of the Sacred Hero the poet put no words but those of Scripture. The whole poem was a hazardous experiment. On the one hand, many people hesitated to read any character-poem founded on Christ's career; on the other, critics felt that the limits the author had imposed upon himself made it impossible for him to claim imaginative merit of a definite character. The action of the Tragedy is direct and swift; the best effort at characterization lies in some of the passages that describe Pilate, of whom a view is

taken far nobler than that expressed in Bacon's sneer. In "Three Books of Song" there had appeared a tragedy in five acts called "Judas Maccabeus," but this interested nobody.

In May of 1868, Longfellow sailed for Europe, and in England he began an enjoyable tour that extended through eighteen months. Cambridge University gladly took occasion to bestow upon him the degree of LL.D. In London he was pulled about by all the celebrated people, and Mr. Gladstone proposed his health at a great dinner. Returning from Italy, he obtained further academic recognition from our country—this time in the Oxford degree of D.C.L.

He was then a fine type of the American scholar, in appearance. His long beard was blanched, like Priam's; his head was covered with milky locks; his eyes were soft and bright; his complexion was pure, although the skin was wrinkled, especially about the eyes. His finely-shaped head, one may be pardoned for pointing out, was thoroughly English in character. Spurzheim once said that, "The general shape of your head shows your capabilities: your face shows what you have done with those capabilities." Any Oxford youth who had the opportunity of looking into Longfellow's face as he marched up erect and hale, to receive his degree, must have noted how healthy and worthy a record lay in the face of the new D.C.L.

The Queen sent for him, and the republican shook Her Majesty simply by the hand, on being introduced. At last, a little wearied of being made so much of, he longingly hied back to his native land, paid his taxes as

soon as he reached Craigie House, and thus "felt at home again."

For many years Longfellow—whose reputation as a skilled translator was beyond all question—had been labouring zestfully at a translation of Dante's "Divine Comedy." This rendering, which is in verse, caused the formation of a Dante Club, at the meetings of which Lowell and Norton carefully criticized every canto of their friend's work. The result is a wonderful rendering of the Florentine's immortal song of Heaven and Hell. The version lacks heat and light. Dante's mystic raptures, his apprehension of the infinite possibilities of woe, his occasionally exquisite sympathy with errors of the human heart, his hate that could search hell for an enemy's face like fierce lightning, his whole range of extreme passions were far different indeed from any moods of the gentle American bard. But Longfellow luckily elected to attempt elegant literalness, rather than reproduction of the impassioned spirit; and in this attempt he has succeeded so astonishingly that it may well be doubted whether there is in the world another metrical translation from any author, at once so literal and so natural in diction. He adopts Dante's arrangement of metres, but drops the rhymes. Day by day, with a steady pulse, Longfellow's hand added half a dozen or a dozen lines to his loved labour, before breakfast-time; and in this way the translation was methodically achieved. Any one beginning the study of Dante in the original tongue could not do better than use Longfellow's version for dictionary and "crib." Take these lines, for instance, selected at random from the thirty-first canto of the "Purgatory":

"Volgi, Beatrice, volgi gli occhi santi,
Era la sua canzone, al tuo fidele
Che, per vederti, ha mossi passi tanti."

Longfellow translates thus:—

"'Turn, Beatrice, O turn thy holy eyes,'
Such was their song, 'unto thy faithful one,
Who has to see thee ta'en so many steps.'"

Literalness could hardly go further in a verse rendering. The value of Longfellow's published version is greatly enhanced by the body of notes which he appended to each section. In February of 1865, the first volume—of advance sheets—went to Italy, in commemoration of the six hundredth anniversary of Dante's birth. The publication of the translation was completed in 1870.

The New York Ledger paid Longfellow three thousand dollars for the right to publish his "Hanging of the Crane"—a domestic idyl, which afterwards appeared as an illustrated book, in 1874. There are about two hundred lines in this poem, which, with its excellently idealized description of a housewarming, proved that the author of "Evangeline" still held the pen firmly in hand. It is said that "The Hanging of the Crane" was written in honour of Thomas Bailey Aldrich and his young wife. In 1875 came "The Masque of Pandora and Other Poems." "The Masque" was recast and put on the stage at Boston in 1881, but utterly failed, by reason of its inherent weakness. Among the "Other Poems" was that song of the poet's noble old age, "Morituri Salutamus." There, too, was printed the "Sonnet to Sumner;" for Sumner now was dead, and the "Five of Clubs" belonged to the chronicles of eld.

"Poems of Places," a collection of what may be termed poetical topography, was brought out by Messrs. Osgood and Co., in 1876–79, nominally under the editorship of Longfellow. In 1878 he returned to a scene he loved when a boy, in "Kéramos," a poem of the potter. "Kéramos" had originally appeared in *Harper's Magazine*. In book form, it was accompanied by a last flight of "Birds of Passage," including "The Herons of Elmwood," "The White Czar," and nineteen sonnets. The first Flight of "Birds" had appeared with "Miles Standish," and included "The Churchyard at Cambridge" and "The Fiftieth Birthday of Agassiz." The second Flight appeared with "Tales of a Wayside Inn," and included "The Children's Hour" and "The Cumberland." The third Flight had appeared with the second series of "Tales," and included "Travels by the Fireside." The fourth Flight appeared with "The Masque of Pandora," and contained nothing noticeable; the fifth Flight was that mentioned as accompanying "Kéramos." Among the nineteen sonnets printed with "Kéramos" were those on "The Three Silences" and "St. John's, Cambridge." In an earlier chapter of this little book it has been hinted that for the shell-bound harmonies of the sonnet-form, Longfellow did not exhibit perfect ear. Yet he is a far better sonnet-writer than Shelley, or Byron, or Tennyson; his sonnets on the "Divina Commedia" are structurally good, and fine in thought; and still nearer perfection is the thought of "Nature."

Lastly came a thin book, made up of the best of the poet's later work. It bore a boding name, "Ultima Thule" (1880). In this book there were many farewells

—the most touching being addressed to Bayard Taylor. The lines that give the volume its title may find a fit place on this page:

ULTIMA THULE.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON GREENE.

WITH favouring winds, o'er sunlit seas,
We sailed for the Hesperides,
The land where golden apples grow;
But that, ah! that was long ago.

How far since then the ocean streams
Have swept us from the land of dreams,
That land of fiction and of truth,
The lost Atlantis of our youth!

Whither, ah, whither? Are not these
The tempest-haunted Hebrides,
Where seagulls scream, and breakers roar,
And wreck and seaweed line the shore?

Ultima Thule! Utmost Isle!
Here in thy harbours for awhile
We lower our sails; awhile we rest
From the unending, endless quest.

It is impossible to help wishing that "unending" here had been "unended." No one, surely, can read these sad lines from an old man who had enjoyed much in life, without being touched.

In *Harper's Magazine* for March, 1882, the aged poet read an account of a ruined convent in Mexico, and by one passage about the convent bells was roused to write his last song—the song about "The Bells of San Blas."

These lines conclude the poem, and ended his singing for ever:

> "Out of the shadow of night
> The world rolls into light;
> It is daybreak everywhere!"

That was the last grand line of a whole-hearted poet, who had never lost faith in his God, and still hoped, like Goethe, for "more light!"

On Friday, March 24, 1882, Henry Longfellow sank peacefully in death, aged seventy-five. Peritonitis had hastened the natural decay. Amid gently falling snow he was buried in the cemetery of Mount Auburn, near Cambridge.

Longfellow to the end had held to the Unitarian faith in which he had been bred.

After the poet's death, a few of his later verses were published under the title of "In the Harbour" (1882). His tragedy, called "Michel Angelo," ran through three numbers of *The Atlantic Monthly* for 1883.

CHAPTER XIII.

AMERICA'S chief poets—Bryant, Longfellow, Emerson, Poe, Whittier, and Whitman—although writing in the youth of their country's literature, and almost contemporaneously, have differed from one another very widely in their aims and styles.

When Bryant as a lad, first read Wordsworth's poems, he felt as if a thousand springs had gushed up in his heart. He was by nature a solidly intellectual being, rather than a dreamer. The vast horizons of American scenery, the "grey and melancholy waste" of ocean, the untenanted prairies, the primeval forests of pine, the unsung majesty of Western rivers whose floods mocked the stream of Nilus—these manifestations of mighty nature impressed his growing mind with an awe that only ceased to be dumb when Wordsworth's songs of beck and hill and dale revealed to him the power that might become his own—the power of teaching in melodious verse the joys of nature-worship. Expanding in the exercise of this priest-like task, his spirit laid itself bare to all the wonderful works of God that lay around him. Patient in observation as any man of science might be, casting about for the hidden teachings of creation, he

became imbued with those deep, calm joys that only nature bestows; his studies became song, chant-like in character, though once or twice exultantly lyrical. With all his sense of beauty in the external world, Bryant is not possessed, so much as Wordsworth was, with potent hopes. His moods are chiefly sombre; he loves best to sing the sad glories of autumn, with a dying fall.

Emerson, too, was strongly influenced by New England scenery; but external nature was to him not so much an object of worship as a stimulus towards the purification of human character. Through all the scenes he depicts, his thoughts pass with a cold keenness like that of the early spring winds. Nothing, to him, is an end-in-itself (as the German philosophers would say) except moralizing. The moral ultimatum of all being is his quest; he is Kant among the poets, considerably bewildered at times by his poetic fancies, and thereby rendered a less consistent preacher. Bryant and Emerson are both limited in their command over the musical resources of language. Bryant in his blank verse seldom failed to produce sonorous, organ-like tones; but in other metres he was not sure of his effect. Emerson clung to no special form of verse; metre was never attractive to him; a strong thought was sufficient at any time to serve him for an excuse to violate prosody; but in his more rhapsodical moments he has attained a clearer lyric cry, a more pathetically human voice, than Bryant ever reached. There are but two elements in the poetry of Emerson—first, the constant search after spiritual developments; and secondly, the study of the laws of so-

called inanimate nature, used as a set-off or analogue to the moral law.

However slight Emerson's sense of artistic form was, he at least idealized consistently. A distinguished student of Greek poetry has remarked with truth that the opposite of the real is not the ideal, but the fantastic. Emerson, so far as his strongly Puritan imagination allowed him, idealized nature and humanity. Edgar Allan Poe was fastidious—even morbidly fastidious—in his love of beautiful form; but he had no root of humanity in him, and little passion for actual external nature. He was not an interpreter. He had no mission, save to create dreams. A greater dreamer in prose than in verse, he has yet added to American literature a few poems of the most striking originality; but of deep spirituality he has none. His loftiest flights of imagination in verse, like his boldest efforts in prose-fiction, rise into no more empyreal realm than the fantastic. His sense of beauty in language was usually fine. Like Gautier, he loved to work "in onyx and enamel." Yet his taste in rhymes occasionally erred amazingly, like Keats's and Mrs. Browning's; and the lines which he reckoned his best point of verbal workmanship—

> "And the silken sad uncertain
> Rustling of each purple curtain—

become positively contemptible, when considered as verses seriously put before us by a poet as an achievement in an imaginative art.

Whittier, using a humble vocabulary, exercises his gentle though uneducated genius in finding natural

beauties amid the hedgerows, romance among the Quakers, and subjects for tears and shame in the ill-kept records of slavery. He puts Emerson's abstract moralizings into the concrete. He has ranged over much ground, but his *forte* lies in dealing with stories of flesh and blood in New England or the South.

Walt Whitman is American among the Americans, untamable as a fowl of the Atlantic, rude in his strength, contemptuous of authority, hopeful of a new cycle of great national histories to be acted on this little earth, and "sounding his barbaric yaup over the roof of the world" in an ecstasy of healthy animalism. Notwithstanding this animalism, he reveals the deepest spirituality at times. His tuneless songs are full of noble thought. It is impossible to describe Whitman without searching for the language of exaggeration. He is a Hebrew bard translated to the American backwoods, where he has turned himself inside out, thence going on to study pantheism on the quays of New York.

Compared with any one of these poets, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow is seen to suffer, in certain points. Longfellow had not Bryant's depth of feeling for ancient history or for external nature. The moral ether which Emerson inhaled upon the peaks of thought was too rare for Longfellow. Morality to Emerson was the very breath of existence; to Longfellow it was a sentiment. Poe's best poetic efforts are evidence of an imagination more completely self-sufficient than Longfellow's was. In the best of Whittier's poems the pulse of human sympathy beats more strongly than in any of our poet's songs. Still more unlike Longfellow's sentimentality is

the universal range of Whitman's manly, outspoken kinsmanship with all living things.

We feel that in these points Longfellow comes short. How then has he outdistanced those men so easily? By virtue of his artistic eclecticism. He was not the single-minded priest of nature that Bryant was; but he took the words out of Bryant's lips, and sang them in a hundred measures. He lowered Emerson's philosophical Puritanism to the capacity of toilers in the streets; Emerson may have aimed, like Goethe, at being "humanity's high-priest" —Longfellow was content to be humanity's city missionary, so long as the common people heard him gladly. Although he was not of heroic mould, he was at least twenty times a nobler man than Poe, with a fund of miscellaneous culture, and a knowledge of human nature that in the long run more than compensated for any inferiority his imagination presented in comparison with Poe's brightest inspirations. He had not the keenness of Poe's artistic sensibility, yet it can at least be said of him that he would have scorned the execrable, if rare, faults that so disfigure Poe's writings in verse. The same width of learning in matters of general culture, to which allusion has just been made, gave Longfellow an appeal to far larger audiences than those that Whittier can attract; and by his gracious choice of subjects, and his treatment of these in almost every form of verse dear to the people, Longfellow has of course laid himself out—and successfully—to win a hearing where Whitman, with all his boasted feeling for democracy, is looked upon as an intellectual Coriolanus, contemptuous and uncouth.

To reach purely sensuous beauty, or abstract intellectual beauty of a still more exquisite sort, is to be a Keats or a Shelley, at least, if not to be a Shakespeare; and it is not necessary to give Longfellow equal rank as an artist with Keats or Shelley. But much as we must reverence and rejoice in the more purely artistic work of men like these, the world still needs poets of another sort to warm ordinary blood. The facts of ordinary homely life—our cradling, our childish sorrows, our youthful temptations, the struggles of maturity, the helpfulness of friends, the decay and regrets of old age, the daily deeds of Death—must we not ever have new poets to sing about these things to us, and hearten us for our work? Could Keats and Shelley have done much with these themes, had they tried? Let it be admitted that Longfellow almost totally lacked the higher imagination that is the originally creative and sustaining power in poetry: we must still give him credit for a wondrously fertile fancy. Along with this pure fancy, he possessed a curiously happy facility in selecting uncommon aspects of common themes; and furthermore, in a few of his ballads —in his "Evangeline," in his "Hiawatha"—he laid hold of very uncommon themes. Most of these themes, common or uncommon, he embellished by his fancy with such a wealth of tender and beautiful sayings, that in every civilized land his verses have become household favourites, permeating the lives of rising generations. It is idle to say that such an achievement could be wrought by talent of a commonplace order. To how many hundreds of imitators did Longfellow set a style? Has any one of these imitators come within measurable distance of him?

The answer to this question must be "No." But these imitators—with their allies who squall "Excelsior" in drawing-rooms—have done much to give the critical a distaste for Longfellow's manner of work. Popularity undoubtedly caused Longfellow to write too easily; the public have continued to accept too eagerly all that he wrote; and therefore it seems to some a merciful task for the army of accomplished pooh-poohers to step in, in the name of the higher criticism, and announce that Longfellow may have been all very well for the vulgar, but was not really a poet of any consequence. Such a judgment does not belong to enlightened criticism. He who has written verses that are committed to heart by millions for the gladdening of their lives, must have written much that is true poetry; and although he is not necessarily among the twelve greatest poets of the world, he is incontestably a great benefactor and a great man.

THE END.

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